Wednesday 13th Jan.

1932

Oh but this is, as I always say, making an apology to myself, not the first day of the year. This is the thirteenth, & I am in one of those lassitudes & ebbs of life when I cannot heave another word onto the wall. My word, what a heaving the Waves was, that I still feel the strain!

We came back from Rodmell last Sunday afternoon — a wet evening, & comfortable to be back, here high up in the air, beyond barking dogs. "I shall go bankrupt if those dogs bark any more" ~~so~~ I said to Annie with some vehemence, & this, implying her ruin, made her speak to Elsie, & the dogs fell silent. Miss Belsher is reported 'very ill'. L. is to see father Belsher this afternoon, & I am to see Mr Herring 'on a private & confidential matter' which I feel to be the printing of a little book of poems by herself. Time — 3.30 to be exact — will prove. Then Miss Cochrane is ill too; the press is supported on 2 legs, one the stout leg of good natured Walton. John labours too, more nervously, & feels dazed, & wants a week off, & wants also, to be our manager, not partner, but to stay in that capacity. So, perhaps, & perchance — for I make no rash boasts — the dear old Press to which I owe so much labour — & fun — oh within the pile of MSS. before me — yes, a great deal of variety & oddity, life on top down here whenever it stays upstairs — may now settle down for life. For our lives. How long will they be? Can we count on

Ms. Niva to get money — she was a notorious swindler who did Hugh out of £70.

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another 20 years? I shall be fifty on the 25th, Monday week that is: I sometimes feel that I have lived 250 years already, & sometimes that I am still the youngest person in the omnibus. (Nessa said that she still always thinks this, as she sits down.) And I want to write another 4 novels: Waves, I mean; & the Tale in the door; & to go through English literature, like a string through cheese, or rather like some industrious ~~[illegible]~~ insect, eating its way from book to book, from Chaucer to Lawrence. There is a programme, considering my slowness, & how I get slower thicker, more intolerant of the fling & the rush to last out my 20 years, if I have them. Lytton goes on, now better, now not so well. And one has taken him back into those sepulchral days when he seemed vanished as part of life. Leonard said "We must make up our minds" that we shall never see Lytton again":— or something like that, which made us feel bereft; the end of a section: & now I say it is not the end.

And Vita supports the weight of the Nicolsons on her shoulders working, working working so that she cant sleep o'nights, Ethel says Hilda says. But why? People should ride life like a horse. This money accumulating, keeping sons at Eton & Long Barn & Sissinghurst at in full swing seems to me a little servile: save that she loves generosity & is industrious, & has that queer vein in her of thinking the slogging money making out like worker, the independent, the professional, romantic. And so she scribbles reviews, broadcasts— pray heaven I may never fall into the money-traps!

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Monday 18th.

And then we heard that Lytton was very ill again—they had thought him dying on Sunday "Give him morphia—it makes no difference" the Dr. said—So down we went to Ham Spray on Thursday. So hot, so fresh. The larks singing over the petrol pumps I remember on the Great West Road as we stopped to fill up. They were strained, silent, held in a leash—Then tears—Pippa sobbing on my shoulder at the Bear after lunch—hopeless almost—he is so ill—how can he get better? Then back to Ham Spray—how lovely, with its flat lawn.—the trees grouped & the down rising & the path climbing the down: the [illegible], with [illegible], thinking [illegible] dogs barking, my [illegible] as we sat at tea. I long sometimes for this sealed up, silent, remote country: long for its little villages; its muddy roads. its distance from Brighton & Peacehaven—the roads that go on to Bath; And so to Oxford, driving through solid England. And so home again, leaving them in the frail lovely house, with hospital nurses popping in & out, all orderly arranged as after long weeks of illness: a light in Lyttons room, the shadow of a screen. He said he liked our coming. Odd again to come thus, after all these years. Today Carrington writes he is slightly better.

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Thursday 21st Jan

And last night Lytton was dying "much worse" Oliver telephoned; & this morning "much better again". So we go to Angelica's party in our fancy dress. It is like having the globe of the future perpetually smashed—without Lytton—& then, behold, it fills again.

Friday 22nd Jan:

Much better was much weaker. Lytton died yesterday morning.

I see him coming along the street, muffled up with his beard resting on his tie: how we should stop: his eyes glow. Now I am too numb with all the smoking yesterday to do more than think thoughts like this. One week, as I know, the pain will soon begin. One toys about with this & that. How queer it was last night at the party, the tightness round everyone's life—ours I mean. Duncan Nessa sobbing together in the studio—the man looking out of the mews window—a sense of something spent, gone: that is to me so intolerable: the impoverishment. Then the sudden kindness. Duncan said "One minds people more & more. It comes over one suddenly that one will tell them something. Then the pang comes over one, after years." Nessa said, What would one like if one died ourselves? that the party should go on. He is the first of the people one has known since one was grown up to die she said. It was very helpless. One knows now how irremediable—but no: I cant think of any words for what I mean. Yet go on writing, numb, torpid as I am. We are going down to Rodmell this afternoon I think. Pippa & James come up today. Carrington & Ralph tomorrow. What is to happen now to Carrington? Yes. So years of Lytton lost to us, stupidly: the thing we shall never have again.

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Saturday
Jan. 30th

Oliver to dinner last night. His cheeks are softer, fatter: he looks a codger, a card; an old buffer. I am about how to take these signs, as if I saw us all becoming figures. rigid, inert. Well: we talked. Never never have I known so odd a character as Karin. Women want children. Ray wants babies. I wont have them. There's no money for anybody. Of course I'm odd — so cold, unemotional. I havent any feelings as a parent. I saw Ruby in November — after 10 years. Oh yes we shall meet but why shouldnt we? She was a liar — thats all — couldnt tell the truth. But very attractive. The boy is called Hunter's on his birth certificate: Jon. But they call him Strachey — said Do you know both the boys are Stracheys — Ruby. She's had 5 children, never by the same man. Lytton was a great man. Oh the Excitement. I came back from India & starved. I found — all that. Lytton ha left all books printed before 1841 to Sephouse. Why before 1841? Some private joke I imagine. Sephouse might have preferred £1000. The unfortunate thing was that Lytton fell in love with Ralph.... You know what Jeans says: Civilization is the thickness of a postage stamp on the top of Cleopatra's needle: & time to come is the thickness of postage stamps as high as Mont Blanc. Possessiveness is the devil. The ideal is they is a little too possessive. The ideal is to cease being in love simultaneously or then it passes into another state. Nobody can be in love for more than 5 years. They cant leave Carrington alone. She says she will

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kill herself — quite reasonable — but better to wait until the
first shock is over & see. Treasure came to me quite
sensible. We've been born too early. Soon they'll have
found a way of curing these growths — Yes — there was
an autopsy. Pippa came down — we had kept it from
her — & said, Ought not we to have one? It had
just been done. It was cancer, an early stage.
Nobody guessed it — nobody could have guessed it —
That led to a long argument about doctors. Oliver is a
tough old buffer: with one flame inside of him — what
the Americans call 'culture'. Thats the only thing:
to value the legacy thats been left us — To read — to
do nothing from 18 to 22 but read. Thats what
we do — thats why we shant grow old — we
shant come to an end. But you cant do it
if you dont do it then. A great man, Roger.
He made things transcendent — showed them lifted
up. He was at Gallendon — Oh that was the
greatest time of my life: & then there was the
Archibald; & then the Easter at Corfe: Lytton,
Henry & I at one Inn: Ray Elly & — at
another. Lytton had the number. Oltolene came
down & stood beneath his window. & he leant out
& they blew each other kisses. She used to
take the stiles in one stride. "Such long legs"
said Lytton "she cant be a woman". Henry
was his most serious love affair. Senhouse is
a very nice young man nice looking nice manners —
but no character, nothing. No Mary was rude to
Jinny, cut her in the street, so I cant see her. Its all
a question of little Mary: nothing abstract. But I
like her — only not that way of life — so
absurd — that Inn: but I like old Jack's stories. Well
I must go. Thank you, Virginia.

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31st Jan.
Sunday —

Having just finished, as I say, the final version as I call it, of my Letter to a Young Poet, I can take a moments liberty. From the cynical tone of this sentence I see that my fanaticism is not secure. Writing becomes harder & harder. Things I dashed off I now compress & re-state. And for purposes which I need not go into here, I want to use these pages for dialogue for a time. Let me race down the subdued & dashed interview with my mother in law. Oh the heat in that rose pink bed sitting room, with 3 fierce lights on, the tables crowded with flowers: & with cakes, a fire blazing. Mrs W. sitting upright with her feet on a stool on a high straight backed chair: more pink silk cushions behind her: pearl necklaces swinging. I came in late; she was talking about — I forget: had been talking about the girl whom Cecil might have loved: the daughter of a solicitor at Colchester. Oh yes: She had had influenza & gone to a house kept up by funds left by Mr. Andrews. *And she was reluctant at first — a home you know. But when she got there what was her amazement! All gentlewomen: flowers everywhere: a cupboard with tonics & sweets to take after them: & Georgian silver on the dinner table: & a garden: & a saloon car to take them out; & grounds; & the hot milk at eleven, or chocolate; & the

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workers, & a hump boy coming for orders: & gardeners: Everything you could wish: not a penny to pay Rent! Thats so rare — Charity that is really thoughtful; Charity for Educated women with nice feelings who have fallen on bad times. Well Virginia — & whats your news? Oh & More. Mr Calthain Neel: Every Christmas he has a card from the Duke of Gloucester: & he now sells Hoovers for £2.10 a week. But what can one do, in these days? One must do what one can. And whats your news Virginia? Exodus? Dont you know Exodus? I something told myself that I havent read the Bible lately. Deuteronomy? Oh yes — that about the building of the Temple. I dont say its all true; but what stories to tell children! I shall never forget telling Bella. Of course a first child is always a wonder child. She used to have her dinner with me when she was 2. And she said what a pity it was summer when Eve stole the apple. If it had been winter, there wouldnt have been an apple. And she said too: I know where gold comes from — thats in the ground: but where do picture frames come from? We had large gilt picture frames with family portraits in the dining room. (V.) Well why dont you write about your children? Oh no: I couldnt say all I think about them. And youre going so soon? But you havent hardly come. And you'll dine with me next week? She came down to the hall, & was I think going into the lounge to talk to some ~~flustered~~ women playing cards.

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Monday Feb. 1st

Last night at Rogers: present; ourselves, Gerald Heard, Igor.
Roger rather sunk & aged after influenza. G. H. in full
discourse: about the experiment made by the Yorkshireman
who married 4 millions, in Devonshire.
14. Its intensely interesting (all he says becomes dust).
I went round the works with him. The Germans send a
man all charges paid for a week. But the vats arent
ready. all the machinery comes from Belgium. They
say it'll be seen delivered on a certain day. & on that
day it'll be seen. The English make excuses: always some reason why
they cant deliver. He says he can keep his
community supplied ~~for 3 months~~ all great orange &
(perhaps) date. give him 3 months, & he could
supply Plymouth. Wood planting neglected in England.
He buys ~~wood~~ ahead — 9 acres, 4 acres: here &
there: then the fields with stumps — whats to be done?
No arboriculture in England...
Helen has cultured me with questions, flattering
sub-acid, about my writing. And about
Roger: & not seeing her: a Baba. She lies in bed &
talks about Leonard: he was with the Esquimaux &
gnawed the shoes of the wives, & so sent for a
puppy — her delirium. all youth is mad, I
said...
Heard said something highly well informed about a
Jt Satanic picture. ~~Heard~~ He is a lean starting eyed
lobster man: a man of the future, without senses.
In with Wells, Plunket &c: but eventually a
nobody. Duncan feels this strongly. Science
running thin as magnesia or quinine in his
veins. Story telling about things &c bygone &
feeling his ordinariness, for he knows all facts &
no feelings. has no humour, no richness, only
advanced ideas. he left. So the air became
deeper. Roger talked about games: children; his daughter Julian's
curtain: & N & D. were almost too stonily malicious.

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Conversation piece: Monday Feb. 1st 1932. 5.30 pm.

I am reading Wells Science of Life, & have reached the hen that became a cock or vice versa. Nelly talks at the door. I hear a characteristic slow & heavy stamp. Then a bold tap at the drawing room door. In comes Ethel Smyth in her spotted fur, like a unclipped & rather overgrown woodland wild beast, species indeterminate. She wears, as usual, her 3 cornered Frederick the Great hat, & one of her innumerable relays of tweed coats & skirts. She carries a leather satchel. Before she has sat down she is talking. "Really I think that building of the kind you describe at Rodmell, is worse than death. After all one may say of death its natural. but this is a wanton desecration. Why your downs? Oh I know L. wouldnt agree, but theres my Rupert Gwynne. He said, he pounced like a wolf on the fold the Monday when they were talking against Landlords — We, & I hope all my family for ever, he said, refuse to sell our land. We think beauty is something to keep — We sacrifice money — well — yes I'm exhausted — Two hours injection.. Not tea, no: but vermouth. It wont make me tipsy? Oh I'm worn out [but she looks like a ruddy sea captain or old apple woman.] Now — questions. But I had such a Good visit from Eddy. He's writing a novel to show that the virtues of the aristocracy, in which I firmly believe though L. doesnt — so L. must reserve. Why not in his own person then I asked? Be noble magnanimous serene, instead of petty Unhelpful & egotistical. Oh Thats his digestion. I assure you he's a phenomenon. Musical.

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How I pity him! forced to live in England with that gift — you dont know the loneliness — ~~it~~ Compare the people at Rasumes. They talk of cricket golf. in Berlin, they have their ham & beer & talk of the the way the violin plays the G sharp. Eddy has the duties of his position — a very great one: very real duties. He's a man of the world — & despises that. I love it. What was I going to say — He played Der Wald. He said nobody knows Ethel Smyth till theyve heard all that. Who made the theme? — I did. Well its the pure flower of the romantic movement. And we sat reading our books & he played & played. He has — character of his own — an original point of view. Oh yes I agree. And he has a deep feeling for you. But how could V. make anything of Mary Wadge under four years he said? She'd look wild, & shook the salt cellar to her with her silver claw. V. would make something very amazing of it. Was ~~anybody~~ not Everybody take a back place once you've known V. I asked. Poor Eddy pumped up the necessary affirmation. Oh my dear dont I know it all — (reference to Lytton) those poor Stracheys: & You who care for so few people. But I must catch my train this time. I'm taking care of myself. I'm worn out. Here are the tickets for the lecture tomorrow in case you can come. My dear V. dont freeze me off — I beg of you. No I cant write to you — I'm completely taken up — three treatments a week. Beecham rang up at eleven — he's going to do the Prison this year. And I wrote to Mrs Snowden — I'm old enough to be your mother. You say ... (These final words were rattled off on the doorstep.)

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3rd Feb

These conversation pieces are artfully contrived to ~~cottage~~ assuage me, about 11.30, after toiling at correcting Donne, who is to introduce the second volume of the Common Reader. I cant go on squeezing my brains dry of water; & so write here for 20 minutes: then I think read Donne: then finish write a novel about Hamlet. clever, oh yes—novels about Hamlet always are. Then lunch: then—Ott Ottoline this evening. Yet I am so much interested in Donne, & in my views that I cannot begin.

Last night then, at Clives. Roger, Nessa Duncan. Clive in his brown tea cosy with the strap hanging down indecently like a tail between his legs. Roger rather shrunk up. Sherry. Little gay dinner. Down we go to the lovely gay room with blue-white chairs. The character of Gerald Heard. W. makes a subtle distinction. "No its not that he prevents me from doing my little owl. Its ~~that~~ not that I dislike his facts—I care about facts from some people. Its that he sets up no relation between himself & me so that I cannot relate his facts to anything." R: But he has passion of mind. V: He is an ascetic. He refused my cigar. R. Yet he doesnt disapprove of the senses. W. He sees nothing. Clive: He loves me, but I find him dryer, more juiceless than a banana. He walks down Bond Street with Raymond & says What a wonderful companion Raymond is because he notices the flags. (Van:) he notices nothing sensual. We live in our senses. he pours forth all those intelligent remarks about the Satanic picture." Then I saw Clive look at Lyttons picture. "Wont have it

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moved. Have it cleaned, by all means, but it looks very nice there. Its the best thing of Lytton. R.
And that horrid vulgar picture by Henry is the one people will know him by. Thats rather summary of Lamb (to D.) Vir: But its far the most like.
R. I did a portrait of Lytton, writing E. Victorians at Durbins. Vir: I'm a little annoyed that he left all his old books to Sebastian. Clive. And his will? I've heard nothing. Vir. Roger. I dont think you understand. Nothing, humanly speaking, is more unlikely, in fact impossible, than that R. should go back to Carrington. He [illegible] opened his heart to me once . . . D.. Well, I'm fonder of Frances than of any of them; but I think as a human being, she might have behaved differently. I think so. C. But you dont understand, Duncan. She was passionately in love—is still—with R. So when it came to the point—and I mustn't come this week end—one shade of pressure from him—how could she resist it? Lyttons letters couldnt be published—they would hurt everybody too much. We protested. Well what about the Nortons? & I've just met a youth who has been a bugger since the age of puberty? Vir. Oh buggery's exploded—nobody could mind that now.
Roger & I love to have walks on life: facts: Roger & I love to have facts poured over us. Clive only likes facts if they are related to something human. A great many small vegetables, handed by Lottie. The ice too hard. So we went upstairs & then we said—

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that France was combining against Japan. L. gave his views on the subject of war with China & Japan. W. said that war is the dullest of all things. Not naval war, said Duncan. He had a cousin Admiral Arbuthnot, who lost all his ships. That was exciting. Only for ten minutes, I said. Roger said Could we not get up a society of artists to protect against the production of works of art. Meninsky is ill & has sent the hat round. There is no public fund for helping painters — only writers. What about William Jowett said Clive, rubbing his hands. Thats a good joke. Poor William's off to the West Indies. So I'm glad morality is vindicated, I said. No, I dont think politics ought to be a matter of Oxford & Cambridge, said Roger. Thats what I wrote & told him when the row was on, said Clive. Lesley liked it — he liked dressing up & being at Court. It was she who forced him to it — telephoning from the basement among the black beetles, I said. Good Earth is a wonderful book, Roger said. It has a quality of objectivity & calm: a new kind of beauty, though the woman's name is Pearl Buck & she's an American. Baron Corvo is a good writer said Clive — Once when I was editing the Athenaeum he wrote & said he could get absolution & though not deliberate repeated mon money in order to write. He had my entire sympathy. Roger went early: stopping his car by the pillarbox, venturously: twice he left the room to see if it were stolen. So to stories of Julian, the war game, Guenteus love affair, & so all talking we parted, Clive to be away in Rome for two months.

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One of the curious things I am now proving — now that I am
going through the stage of Lytton's death — is that for us
fame has no existence. We say we cant publish Lytton's
letters for 50 years, if at all. We cant write about him.
He has no funeral. I dont know where his ashes are
buried. There is no commemoration any more, except
when we meet & talk; or in the usual ways, alone at
night, walking along the street (but these states in my
case have yet to be verified: all sensation now: I
mean what Lytton's death means I dont yet know)
Hence to think of fame is superfluous — what people will
say when I'm dead. The solid statue that father
left — that exists no longer. Philip discovered in the
Talk yesterday with Ottoline.
dining room, with its yellow cloth, & reddish shade,
reading letters & eating stones. Ott out — selling
Lawrence first Editions (how I'd like to tell that to
Lytton!) We discussed Dryden: P. said he can do
nothing but read poetry, gets into an exalted state.
Talk of
I had been buying Dryden for Julian. She had toast & tea.
celebrated passages. In came Ott: private: he dusts a
Talk of Bertie's autobiography. Katherine Mansfield had
Chapter to abuse him — me all
disillusioned him. "I heard them discussing too much scent &
night through the floor." She was This he sends
powder. She had meant nothing to him. "Et tu Brute?" — Is it
you — I could only write back now Bertie. He
had Lawrence, Aldous, Cannan, Osbert — but that he
replied he was astonished I should mind, So to the yellow
always hurts those he loves... long thin
drawing room. So to Lytton: his charm, with Henry...
fingers, & time I knew him about 1908, He was so
But no letters could be published.
considerate. I wrote to him last summer —

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he answered with great affection, about the past. One could always count on that, though one never saw him much. I've asked James to send back my letters. Sprott told me he had read them — I dont want them to be handed round. And do you think he was happy? with Carrington? with Senhouse? (So to Tom & Vivienne & the day that makes mem: to Molly, & her deafness: to the Waves — Jinny made me think of Mary — & Rhoda made me cry with Version of you — but how could you write that book? the strain, the intensity — at which I kindle, as always, & say I wish you had Johnsons Lives of the Poets. And she says she is reading Eliz Bowen who tries to write like me, & will L. come & meet Hodgson who breeds bull dogs; & I say I am an aristocrat in writing; & she confirms this & abuses Vita for writing about Knole, & being equally conscious of noble blood; & I praise Vita — denounce her novels; & Philip 'works' next door; & there is Ott's pug like a small Chinese lion on the chair in the hall: & Philip pokes out with a copy of Drydens poems in double columns, & I think how I would describe this to Lytton, & go home, embraced, loved perhaps — anyhow here's a letter this morning to ask me to think well of her when she's dead. & to send her the Waves.

Monday 8th Feb.

Why did I ever say I would produce another volume of Common Reader? It will take me week after week, month after month. However a year there — save for diversions in Greece & Russia — in reading through English literature will no doubt do good to my fictitious brain. Rest it anyhow. One day, all ages rush. fiction will

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burst in: These remarks are jotted down at the end of a long morning work on Donne, which will have to be done again, & is it worth the doing? I wake in the night with the same gloom in an empty hall. Lytton dead, & those factories building. What is the point of it—life, when I am not working—suddenly becomes thin, indifferent. Lytton is dead, & nothing definite to mark it. Also they write flimsy articles about him—Jack Squire for instance—as if he had not mattered very much. And we go on—at Rodmell for the week end; & went over to Caburn, & walked among those primeval downs, so comfortable: bowl like a Heal bed, L. said, so comfortable: bowl shaped shadows; half circles; curves: a deep valley. Quentin last night: how mature, in some ways; speaking with deliberation: calmly explaining his situation with John. All Nessa's sense, & Clive's shrewdness. Suddenly he asks me—drawling childish voice for books upon Italian history, for some account of some armament deal; for he is notably objective, interested in politics, in behaviourism, in psycho-analysis. This was what our talk was of. And Benita, he says, is too much afraid of me to send me her memoirs: some reproach implied—unless this is merely the result of 'Mrs Woolf's hallucinating sensibility"—a phrase from an unmatched Una Sterne" article on music in the M. Guardian, rather tickling my vanity.

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Thursday
11th Feb

My mind is set running upon A Knock on the Door (what's its name?) owing largely to reading 'Letters on Woman' — how the most ancillary & decorative creature in the world of the future. because she has been freed, in 10 years, & has not proved anything. So in this mood I record Mary's telling me last night, how she loved cigars; her Jack refuses to let her smoke them — against his idea of what his wife should do — silly affectation — or to let her dress in a dress cut low at the back Can't go out with you in that frock — You put on another — It's indecent — — yet will praise Diana for wearing the same. "I threw everything out of the window once" she said. " He treats us — Barbara & me — as if we were tame leopards — pets belonging to him" As indeed they do, since neither has a penny except of Jack's earning & giving. She burst into tears, about Lytton: her spirit, her most intimate friend — And now I live merely with barbarians. I have nobody to talk to. Lytton came every week. He told me about all his boys. He sat sobbing bitterly when Roger was cruel to him. Oh he loved him — Just loved him — That's what I couldn't understand, & you could. I said. And he was so brilliant, so alive, last winter. I went to him about a fortnight before he was ill. I was in an ecstasy. I said You're wonderful, wonderful — He was so vigorous, giving a party to five young men. We stood in the hall. There was a letter from one of them refusing to come. And he kissed me. He was so sweet. He would come in. There was the coat he wore. He would talk of everything, tell me everything And all the time there was this growth in him; & here Vanessa & Mary sit talking of him & he's dead. I can't believe it."

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Sat 13th Feb.

I break off from my plain duty which is to read the ~~Anat~~ Anatomy of the world, to record Roger's lecture: last night. Roger rather cadaverous in white waistcoat. A vast show. Pictures passing. He takes his stick. Get into trouble with the lanternist. Is completely at his ease. Elucidates unerringly with fascinating sub- subtlety this quality & that: investigates (with his stick) opposing diagonals: emphasises the immediate & instantaneous in French art. Here a mother Queen about to fling out her finger: here a mother turning to look at something, loving bending in pensive & tender reverie, while her child struggles to look the other way, & she restrains it, unconsciously, with "just perfect ease & control." In the interval we talked to Mary, about the affair of Potocki which is filling our house, & making ring our telephone.

[This man is sentenced to 6 months prison because he submitted for private publication the MS of a poem dedicated to John Penis in the mount of Venus for which Ellenor Leonard has committed herself to pay ~~to pa~~ paid £20] Up dashes Nina & Dunlan — Raymond in a tiger sweater; & so back to more lecture: & so home, through icy streets — winter is on us — I write with both sides of my fire on, & my winter jersey — go to Ninas, where the stove was kindled, & there was hot soup & cold meat, — coffee & biscuits — all with the usual skill & organising capacity. There we laughed & gossiped: about the lecture: about Bob & his outburst — 'I cant stay in your house — I must leave. if you ~~say them~~ impute such notions to my friend — his dyng — a better socialist than you are —

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I am appalled at the meanness of human human nature – Here allen. The wisest political thinker of our time – a genius nothing but abuse of him for taking a peerage. – It dont matter of course – he'll kill himself – he'll be dead by next year. No I oughtn't to say this – I'm sorry I lost my temper. I apologise (eating muffin: seizing the tea pot, like some shaggy, surly, unkempt old animal – And then we had to give him a lift to Chelsea. ...] And we talked about a new life of Jesus, ~~also about~~ which offers two proofs of his existence – wonderful Rogers intellectual vitality after speaking to the Queen's Hall for 2 hours – & really excited about the reality of Jesus. Duncan Guenlin quoted French with a nice accent. Duncan I had bought a fine apple with the extra 25/ I paid on his money for the screen – that now lights up the drawing room. I brought it home on Thursday. Bob never noticed.

Feb. 16th And I have just 'finished' I use inverted commas periodically, my dome, a great but I think well intentioned friend. And I'm fuming, slightly, over Nelly's typical servant meanness – after you said you didn't want Lottie hanging about here – but I didn't say that Nelly – oh we thought that – what you meant – not very nice to hang about – you said you wouldn't have her doing that – of course I told her she must take a place at once: this she gone to the lady at Victoria – this to revenge themselves on me: to make me feel uncomfortable – But I promptly lost my temper, a great relief, & told Nelly that this is the last time I help Lottie or interest myself in their affairs –

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whereupon the orange is withdrawn, & says she meant nothing. Then Mrs McAfee has rejected my article on Skating & asks for one on Q. Elizabeth instead, which she shant get: then I have to dine with Ethel Sands tonight, & must go to Bradleys to try on; & must have my hair curled. And I'm pining & itching to write my—whats it to be called?—"Men are like that?"—no thats too patently feminist—the sequel then, for which I have collected enough powder to blow up St Pauls. It is to have 4 pictures. And I must go on with the C. Reader—for one thing, by way of proving my credentials. To sit to Nessa: to the Gay & Debonair; to tie up parcels: to the Bank Quarter where I met Elena R. & reflected upon the transiency of human beauty, passion, & illusion; & so up to lunch.

Friday 26th Feb.

Now I have 'finished' the Arcadia, & have 25 minutes in which I ought to correct my Letter to a young poet & give it to John. John is fractious & irritable, said to be the effect of love. And what a mint of people I've seen; dining with Ethel, having Desmond & Lord David & Ottoline & the Keyneses, & going to Monks House—so marsh white & lovely, the fields, & the river where the man caught a large sea trout, trout die if you draw blood, he said, speaking very slowly, wind bitten, that bitter cold day: & then I saw—oh the Keynes—yes—they say Julians dissertation is no good, quite uneducated—& talked of Lytton, & how Maynard thought we really carried unconvention too far—when Ramsay died there no service, no farewell.

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his friends went to Golders Green & the coffin was carried
through them. But with Lytton there was no mark to say
this is over. And he met Senhouse a fortnight later, &
was the first to tell him that Lytton had left him his books.
Then I've not seen Ethel this 2 weeks, because of the rush;
& today Sibyl & Hugh & Eliz Williamson all come,
knocking on each others heels to lunch tea; &
we go to the Camargo on Sunday; & must go in
to the Wrong 50 birthday — this will happen yearly now
after dinner tonight. And to the French pictures.
And Ka shut me in the middle class bedroom
effectively last night — so condescending, so
self approving, with her docile stories of respectable
lunches with the Cornish aristocracy & Mrs
Leverton Harris. Who is Mrs L-H? Oh dont
you know — she signs letters on George Moores 80th
birthday. And I do hope you will do some Common
Reader — I prefer them to — — " This
little bit of patronage annoyed me more than it should.
The day Ka came too we sold the ~~10,000~~ copy of the Waves:
ten thousandth which thus beats all my novels, unexpectedly.

NYPL

Monday
Feb. 29th

Clark

And this morning I opened a letter, & it was from 'yours
very sincerely J.J. Thomson" — the Master of Trinity;
& it was to say that the Council have decided to ask me
to deliver the ~~four~~ Clark Lectures next year. Six of them.
This, I suppose is the first time a woman has been asked;
& so it is a great honour — think of me, the uneducated
child reading books in my room at 22 H.P.G. — now
advanced to this glory. But shall refuse: because
how could I write 6 lectures, to be delivered in
full term, without giving up a year to criticism;
without becoming a functionary; without sealing
my lips when it comes to tilting at Universities:
without putting off my knock on the door; without
perhaps shelving another novel. But I am rather
inclined to smile, as I lunch with Mrs Dodge today,
& she gives me a book with Dinner autographs:"
as I buy a pair of shoes at Babers; as I sit
down dutifully to correct an article for the
Common Reader. Yes: all that reading, I say,
has borne this odd fruit. And I am pleased: &
still more pleased that I wont do it; & like to
think that father would have flushed with pleasure
could I have told him 30 years ago, that his
daughter — my poor little Ginny — was to
be asked to succeed him: the sort of compliment
he would have liked.

NYPL

And now, Thursday 3rd March, I am rather upset because the devil whispered, all of a sudden, that I have six lectures written in Phases of Fiction; & could furbish them up & deliver the Clark lectures, & win the esteem of my sex, with a few weeks work. True, L. says since the middle 4 were published in America, I couldnt do this without complete re-writing: & as I've refused, to open the matter would be difficult: & I ought therefore to dismiss the whole thing. Yet, such is the perversity of my mind, I can now think of nothing else: my mind is swarming with ideas for lectures: things I can only say in lectures: & my refusal seems lazy & cowardly. Yet two days ago I was repugnant to the thought: longed only for freedom in which to write a tap at the door: & was convinced that I should be a time serving pot hunter if I accepted. I've no doubt the fizz will subside — still what should I do if some friendly fellow of Trinity asked me to think it over? Soberly, I know that if I sat down to rewrite Phases of Fiction it would mean complete immersal for some weeks: I should have to re-cast, re-read: I should be impregnated with the lecturing manner: its jocosity, its emphasis: then I should be jaded by the time I approached a tap: & when I had done A tap, I should be 2 or 3 years distant from the Waves. Anyhow, I'm thankful that I wrote decidedly in the mood I was then in, before the devil whispered. I went to my drawer & found that old MS: so well written, so full of thought — all the work done for me. The sensible thing to do would be to talk it over quietly next week end with Dadie: But Moreover. L. is definitely against it. But then Nessa & Alice Ritchie were instinctively in favour.

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Oh but I am too tired to write this morning—can't finish my Dorothy Osborne, all because of the Polish Count—Count yesterday.

And the peaches were bad last night. And we had Roger Jack & Mary to dine. And they said the saddle was raw, but it wasn't. And oh dear I had lunched with Raymond to meet Mrs Keppel; a swarthy thickset raddled direct (My dear, she calls one) old grasper: whose fists have been in the money bags these 50 years: but with boldness: told us how her friends used to steal, in country houses in the time of Ed. 7th. One woman purloined any jewelled bag left lying. And she has a flat in the Ritz; old furniture: &c. I liked her, on the surface. I mean the extensive, jolly, brazen surface of the old courtesan: who has lost all bloom; & acquired a kind of cordiality, humour, directness instead. No swimbladder as far as I could see; nor snobbishness: immense superficial knowledge, & going off to Berlin to hear Hitler speak. Shabby under dress: magnificent furs: great pearls: ~~[illegible]~~ a Rolls Royce waiting, going off to visit my old friend the tailor; & so on— But I'm fuddled with talk, & we're starting for Ham Spray to talk to Carrington—Dear, dear—a lovely day though. Oh & Eddy says the Waves is a failure: a miss. Eddy pushed his way in; & I liked him for pushing, once I had done hating him. How formidable I must be.

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Sat.
March
12th

So we went to Hamspray — a lovely bright day, & got
there at 1.30. "I thought you werent coming" said
C. She came to the door, in her little jacket, & socks with
a twisted necklace. Her eyes were very blue pale.
"I sent a telegram: but I do everything wrong. I thought
you didn't get it". She was pale, small, suffering violently
very calm. She had hot soup for us. I looked at the
trees We eaten the cold dining room. I didn't light
the fire, she said. She had cooked us a nice hot lunch,
succulent, with her own hands. We talked of May &
Lytton. She had discovered whom May loves, owing to an
indiscretion. But Lytton made her swear not to tell.
So she didnt. We talked with effort; did she want us?
Did she resent our coming to spy on her? She was
bitter, laughing at Barbara. "She asked how she could
help. I told her to cut sandwiches. But she took an
hour, talking to Tommy." Then we sat in the
verandah. We asked her to make us woodcuts
for note paper. And to do designs for Julia's book.
We tried to gossip — about Mrs Keppel: about Saxon:
She laughed once or twice: she & her eyes seemed
to get bluer. Then it got cold & we went & sat in
Lyttons study — all beautifully neat, his notepaper
laid out — a great fire; all his books exactly fitting
the shelves, with the letters over them. We sat
on the floor round the fire. Then L. suggested a
walk. She took us to her grove. She said
the trees had a flower which smelt very sweet in
summer. She said she had some notes to write:
& would we go by ourselves. We only walked to
the bottom of the long low down. Then L.
~~went~~ to do the car, & I wandered in the garden
& then back into the sitting room. I was
taking out a book when C. came in & asked

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if we would have tea before we went. She had made it.
She & I went upstairs, arm in arm; & I said Let me
see the view from the window. We stood looking out —
She said Dont you think one ought to keep a room
exactly as it was? We went to Dorothy Wordsworths
house. Her room had been kept exactly as she
left it. There are even the same prints & little
things on the table. I want to keep Lyttons rooms as
he had them. But the Stracheys say this is morbid.
Am I romantic about it d'you think? Oh no, I'm
romantic too, I said. And we went back to L's
sitting room. She burst into tears, & I took her in
my arms. She sobbed, & said she had always been a
failure. There was nothing left for me to do. I
did everything for Lytton. But I've failed in everything
else. People say he was very selfish to me. But
he gave me everything. I was devoted to my father.
I hated my mother. Lytton was like a father to me.
He taught me everything I know. He read poetry &
French to me." I did not want to lie to her — I could
not pretend that there was not truth in what she said.
I said life seemed to me sometimes hopeless, useless,
when I woke in the night & thought of Lyttons death.
I held her hands. Her wrists seemed very small. She
seemed helpless, deserted, like some small animal left.
She was very gentle; sometimes laughing; kissing me;
saying Lytton had loved his old friends best. She
said he had been silly with young men. But
that was only on the top. She had been angry
that they had not understood how great he was.
I said I had always known that. And
She said I made too much of his young
friends. She said Roger was "as better —
said, very dim in the intellect. He could

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Then, as we were leaving the room to go she
suddenly picked up a little French box
with a picture of the Arc de Triomphe
upon it & said "I gave this to Lytton -
Take it. James says I mustn't give
away Lytton things. But this is all
right. I gave it him" So I took it.
There is a Cross on it. How
frightened she seemed of doing wrong -
like a child who has been scolded.

never have a real intimacy — it wasn't sharing everything — only Roger was very high spirited & liked going to Rome & rather liked Lytton reading aloud to him — but they couldn't talk. And this last year Lytton made up his mind to be middle aged. He was a realist. He faced the fact that Roger could not be his love. And we were going to Malaga & then he was going to write about Shakespeare. And he was going to write his memoirs, which would take him ten years. It was ironical, his dying, wasn't it. He thought he was getting better. He said things like Lear when he was ill. I wanted to take you to see him the day you came, but I was afraid to. James & Pippa said we must not run any risk, & it might have upset him. "No, of course not" I said. "Roger will take the books of course — he will have to." And what else did we say? There was not much time. We had tea & broken biscuits. She stood by the fireplace. Then we said we must go. She was very quiet & showed no desire for us to stay. She came down into the front of the house. She kissed me several times. I said "Then you will come & see us next week — or not — just as you like?" "Yes, I will come, or not" she said. And kissed me again & said Goodbye. Then she went in; & turned & I waved & she waved back & she went into the house. Next morning at 8.30 the gardener heard a noise in her bedroom. He went in & found she had shot herself through the thigh. She died in 3 hours. She was conscious when Ralph & Alix & Bunny came.

[She also took me into Lytton's bedroom. I saw his great bed: & the Anrep mosaic: his cupboard & things.]

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Thursday
17th
March

So Carrington killed herself; & again what L. calls "these mausoleum talks" begin again. We were the last to talk to her, & thus might have been summoned to the inquest; but they brought it in an accident. She maintained this, even to Ralph. Her foot slipped as she was shooting a rabbit. And we discuss suicide: & I feel, as always, ghosts ~~dwindling~~ changing. Lytton's affected by this act. I sometimes dislike him for it. He absorbed her & made her kill herself. Then the romantic completeness which affects Mary. Then 'a beautiful gesture — her life & her death.' Nonsense says Leonard: it was pathetic: the real thing is that we shall never see Lytton again. This is unreal. So we discuss suicide. And the ghosts as I say, change so oddly in my mind; like people who live, & are changed by what one hears of them. Now we have to see Pippa, & James & Alix. Then to Rodmell: then — perhaps — to Greece with Roger & Ha. A venture that would be: & I think we're both in the mood for ventures after this morbid time: so much talk of death; & more death is of course. We went from Cambridge on Saturday to Kings Lynn: & through the lovely lonely coast that lies between that & Cromer, where I intend to go again: green meadows against the sea; & trees; & complete solitude; & now & then a line of little old houses: & Stiffkey with its hall: & some village spread out, as in a mediaeval picture, upon the rise of a down: & lovely stubborn unknown place names: & wild roads: & Houghton; Blickling, Holt, & Coke of Norfolk & the Pastons — all this jumble somehow shadowed by Carrington's death: the name Partridge of course appearing on tombs & Grocers shops

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Friday 18th March

Last night at William Plomers: talk, talk talk – Let me try to remember: on cooking: breadmaking; peaches rotten; Gladstones; going over the house: Tony's Dukes: Tony bald, innocent, blue eyed, slow stumbling; William compact & robust. An eye for furniture – Tony; tables, beds & sofas, in the Empire style. Gas fire talk of the Fountain. Oh & Tony's father just wife died of apoplexy in Ch's. through running to catch the boat on a holiday, a very fat woman. Mary Butts. "I cannot say anything of my sister – she is a bad woman – pretentious – I can see no merit in her book – pretentious. She corrupts young men. They are always committing suicide. She now has married Gabriel Atkin – without any character. They were given 25 decanters for their wedding." Tony is ashamed of Mary, who thus defiles the Butts blood. In came Louise Morgan, the interviewer, nerve drawn, lined, crimson, agile: & Mrs Paul Robeson, negroid, vivacious, supple, talking like a woman on the stage: chiefly to L. about negroes. And Janin, who admires my books, & has a friend who wants to translate: a thin skinned frog all gesture & wrinkle: a coffee merchant Ex diplomat: despises society: stories of Colefax French Embassy. The duke of Vendome – "Que c'est mêlée, mon monde!" & Talk, talk, talk. And cold: & a glass of green water; & so home to bed. William rather pompous, ceremonious, & considerate. Tea with Nessa, Julian & Mr Ramsey: the dissertation: Nessa wishes him to give it up. Rothenberg satisfied with him – who what ever he does – How dull this is to me – who like faults. Talk of Carrington – how long shall we talk of Carrington? Dispute as to how she got her gun. Mary's story of the 3 rabbits on the lawn.

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I am not sure of the present day, save that it is Thursday & tomorrow is Good Friday & therefore we are at Rodmell on the loveliest spring day: soft: a blue veil in the air torn by birds voices. I am glad to be alive & sorry for the dead: cant think why Carrington killed herself & put an end to all this. True, they are building the vast Elephant grey sheds at Asheham; but I intend to see them as Greek temples: & Percy says they are building two cottages — but we wait to see if this is so. And the country is lovelier & lovelier: more friendly, charming, brilliant, still with great empty spaces, where I want to walk, alone, & come to terms with my own head. Another book? What? Merciful to be free, entirely to think this out; neednt write a line I dont want to, or squander a moment on repetition. Two books on Virginia Woolf have just appeared — in France & Germany. This is a danger signal. I must not settle into a figure. Perhaps we are becoming more sociable. Mrs Hawkesford wants to bring her daughter to tea. I think we shall go to Greece with Roger & Margery. And — well, we go to tea with Mr Baring on Monday. I'm drowsing in this heat & speed. Cant correct anymore C-R- articles: nor write letters. Yet it isnt lunch time yet. And theres the paper to read. Odd that Lytton didnt write more. Which life should one lead — the life one likes. I like writing. I like change. I like to toss my mind up & watch to see where it'll fall. Nessa off to Cassis. Clive coming back. Then the London season: then here again. A happy life. But encompassed by violence — human life I mean. Mrs Bowen. Stammering, shy, conventional, to tea.

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25th March. Friday

Such is the atmosphere of days that I thought this was the Sunday, because it is Good Friday— The weather is Sunday weather—divinely good, warm, unclouded— Oh how lovely my view would be if it weren't for the grey galvanised sheds—how am I to absorb them into the view? And I want to write— I'm little story, when I go into Good Friday gloom. I'm tired giving our criticism— But isnt it futile to get away into that life—where all the proportions are different—when I still have Lord knows how many brilliant articles—all cut out rounded, coloured, like magic lantern slides, to correct! An odd gulf between the one world & the other. I think I'll go into the house & fetch my De Quincey who comes next. I am rather desultory. Cant string all my ideas on one thread. Leonard is in a pickle with Wells, & cant get hold of the facts with which to confute him. On the other hand, the dogs are thinking more & barking less. the result of aging like— One poor beast is they say 'taped'—has his mouth—sealed: not altogether: barking again: Percy thinks a good walk might be wholesome. Percy thinks the authoress cook, & says didn't we hear Pinka barking all one night—a rustic attempt at amplification which fails to convince. Why is there always this relationship between master & servant?—Maynard says its the same in office. Always deceit & distrust. Our Transition age, perhaps. Perhaps we go to Sissinghurst tomorrow: there are 2 people with their house for life.

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We went to Sissinghurst — I'm so tired with correcting Dr.
Burney that I must run my pen here — & drove a fine June
Grey morning. Odd the merging of Surrey into Kent.
The sloping hop oasts do it, I think: then the little dark
away villages: what led people to pitch on the 18th
century where they did? A Tudor house, alone, on the road:
why build there? L. notices the way; I these little facts.
Harold came out in a love Jacket: Vita in breeches &
pink shirt. We went over the grounds. H. said
I'm getting nobler & nobler as we get poorer. I've refused an
offer to write for the American papers. Oh but there are
myriads of things to do here. "Yes we want to turn
those stables into great bedrooms: & build a library
across the courtyard, says Vita. All is planned.
H. has drawn it in his note book. Really
have been built & fires laid. Lunch in the boys
cottage. Talk of Beaverbrooks party — to which H
went with Enid Jones — Mrs Oh so lovely — the
clothes: then to Heinemann: people seemed to have
Dust scattered on them. Enid became quite upset.
How she wants to write, but has to give parties for
her husband. And I was sleepy & asked — the Rolls
Royce used. Got to the Temple two quick & she'd not
have finished her story: But she had finished it
And next day I got a letter to say that she had almost
— killed herself? I suggested — no, broken down.
She wants to be a writer. Since the genius? I
Mr & Belloc Lowndes. So we ate cold
Salmon & raspberries & cream & little variegated
chocolates given by Lady Sackville, now at their feet
& drank oh lots of drinks: & then climbed Vitas
tower: lovely pink brick, but like Knole. not
much view, save of stables that are to be
guest rooms. So home. And then a very wet

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Sunday & a prodigious reading & drowsing — I've now carried to perfection the art of sleeping & reading & making up half a book in the wildest way asleep. improvising, & then surprised to wake up & find none of it true.

Yesterday we went to Rottingdean to tea with Maurice (as I'm now to call him) He & Elizabeth in a long sunny room full of books, tables, plants; rather bad taste; rich; nothing very nice to look at; two sweating dusty footmen brought in innumerable plates. In came Ethel: in grey tweed; & a cherubic cavalry captain called Grant, who is Peter Davies' partner: the very spit & image of a soldier in Punch: many peoples ideal, I daresay: so suave, masculine foolish; exactly a round peg in his hole. All the slang right & the snobbery & the culture. & the self-possession. Had killed animals in every part of the East. Talk, of course, wildly detailed & emphatic & urban about Greece. You must see — where's the map? You get out of the train — Meteora — where's the map? You get out at the — you get a car — no we couldnt — go to Gedman is — Athens — oh & dont forget Aegina: you must hire a boat — oh that evening — &c &c. And then talk about publishing: & I slipped my anchovy sandwich into my bag, & took it out, thinking it was my lighter. Ethel balanced by the fire: told us stories about Emperors: Maurice prompted: laughed at her. "I've known her 40 years & he's always shocked — feels what people feel at the other end of the room. Nice feelings. I havent any. I'm going to write a book called The nude, the Cupboard & Mrs Woolf. You've kept my letter you say — you those;

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a strange woman — loves getting letters — so I write, sheet after sheet. Nothing I like better. I used to keep a diary. Since I knew her, two years ago in February, I've written only letters...

And Mrs. Woolf we want you to write a biography for us in 30,000 words. You'd pay a devil £15 to get up the facts for you. Then you'd have nothing to do but dash it down. You'd do it in two months. By way of bargain I'll offer you the MS. of a gardening book. Oh we've lost heavily over our expensive books. Dizzy's edition fills our cellars. I've come in to make us less high brow. I want novels. Ideas. That's what the Gen. making suggestions to authors — that chinless man to suggest to me. Pah! So home; after Jelly Mrs bedrooms a. A shy, lobster coloured Italian man, tiptoeing about the room to fetch things. Keeps his house. I think, for his friends. Drinks. Sentimentalises. Would like to be taken seriously.

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Monday 11th April

the eddy of travel—wisps & straws—already whirling round.
I have a lot of things to bring on my table. We start at
10 on Friday: shall be dashing down the Dalmatian coast
this time next week. Embedded as I am in Tavistock Sqre
I cant make much play with this. Also its fiendishly
cold, wet, blowing, like last year in France. I like this
adventure of Greece all the same: & the fact that we are
actually going with Roger. Margery; & that—intimacy—
will be part of our journey—the result of Lyttons death—
this desire to be with friends. I am muddled headed—
this perpetual criticism tires my brain. I've almost
done De Quincey though, & am well on with the book.
As for personal facts—it seems likely that our John will
not stay. That he wishes to work half time in order to
write. Elizabeth Williamson is a possibility—rain
rain—it drums on my skylight. L. is doing Press
accounts & Monks and we should net £2000.
Hail now: a camel coloured sky. I am waiting for
lunch. Dear me, I ought to read some hideously obscure
poems. Tomorrow we go to Monks House to take
Pinka—there is a litter gently waiting—like a child's
letter. I've seen the Nicolsons, & Ethel, & Kingsley
Martin—Harold up to be looked at for that job.
And James. Alex. Lytton left masses of poems—
And unfinished plays—not much good, James says. And
box upon box of letters—Dora's still lost. What to
do? said James. He said nasty things about everyone.
How can they be published? Could one extract a
philosophy? He had meant to write one more
book for money in Washington & then burn his boats:
declare himself & live abroad. Declare what? But
Everything. His hatred &c. Sex: love:
doubt it. There was Ham Spray.

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Monday 18th April

On board the Tevere, off the coast of Italy. Yes, but I've forgotten to get out my ink pot. & thus the splendour of these first words is committed to the gold pen.

My mind — but is this to be a record of my mind? — truth is I've not thought of a form, for the book — shall it have one — or none? — I was so knife-splitting, flower expanding that morning at Victoria: I felicitated myself upon being a writer. Whatever I saw was so complex. There was a bride, dressed in the colours of the Union Jack, brand new handbag. And Helen, the full blown rose petals dewed with moisture, come to say Good bye: & the Yak chaffed me: for she is thick as an oak, & wears a rough white pelt, confined by a girdle — the Yak said "If you'd brought a dog I should have said Good bye": I divined antagonism. This has developed only into a pervasive inferiority complex. I'm one of those superior beings, the thinkers, who exist by virtue of their white petals; this latter nervousness I vanquish by visiting her in her carriage alone, while L & R play chess & teach each other Greek. R is sweet, rich, accommodating, infinitely ~~[illegible]~~ generous, & rolls out rich Italian commands to the gondolier, all waving

for seven persons who dont come, for no one travels this year; by the Canal, at the end of St Marks. We take a gondola for one hour, & so cross to San Giorgio; & see the miraculous altar: & peer; — climb; & smooth our soles on the red yellow rosy pavements, swaying out like the sea, with inlaid flowers: & Venetian light in pale & sequent: the palace, say 2 pretty frauds, examples of inlay & carpentry. That old fraud Ruskin — we were now in St Mark Square, looking at Adam & Eve. There are chapters about that. He was too verbose. Thats a great pity. Everything had to be squared — Even these finicking bedpalaces must be morally Good — which they're not — oh no — merely slices of coloured stone. Dinner at the Cavallo — the old one gone bankrupt. Out after the play, in the theatre, flung with green glass beads, onto the black tossing water, so still silent, so swaying: & the poor people asked us not to overhang the traghetto: & there were cactuses; & a man singing in the morning; & L. & I went to the Tiepolo church: & the thick yellow service with the priests weaving a web in incantation, & the little boys & the reverence & secularity & ancientness made in [illegible] This is the magic we want: & magic, here must be; so long as magic keeps its place: So aboard our spacious orderly well found ship, now passing the coast of Italy.

April

Athens.
~~[illegible]~~ 21st Thursday.

Yes. but what can I say about the Parthenon – that my own ghost met me, the girl of 23, with all her life to come: that; & then, this is more compact & splendid & robust than I remembered. The yellow pillars – how shall I say? – gathered grouped, radiating there on the rock, against the most violent sky, with staring ice blue, & then under black: crowds flying as if suppliants (really Greek schoolchildren) the Temple like a ship, so vibrant, taut, sailing, though still all these ages. It is larger than I remembered, & better held together. Perhaps I've washed off something of the sentimentality of youth. which tends to make things melancholy. Now I'm 50 (I signed this boldly in the hotel book – the good Yak unwarned – another proof of unconsciously complex) Say I'm greyhaired & well through real life suppose I like the vital, the flourish in the face of death. Then there's Athens like crumbled egg shells beneath, & the black grey bush tufted hills. "The Germans come out like things hidden in a pocket" I said. Sure enough, when the storm passed over, out they

Clammy

they came, hirsute, perspiring unattractive people, <u>owning</u>, we thought, more of the Acropolis than any other nation. We wandered; Roger said Awfully swell. awfully swell. At the Museum in the morning he said they dont compose. That a vase puts shape— Look at the Kouroi of the vase:— & no background. There were, & still are — emptied of Greek black & red or red & black pots, each capable of inspiring a volume. & before them trail tired children, tired mothers, the ardent shabbiest raggiest housemaids & ~~[illegible]~~ clerks, whose whole fortune has been spent on the ticket, & they'll go home, & dominate some little suburban street on the strength of 'I was in Athens in April 1932": within the pure white marble bust after Pheidias on the mantelpiece. This is depressing in museums. I like Athens about 7, when the streets are hurrying clamouring, flitted across by all those black whitefaced women, & shawled women, & dapper little men who come with the bats & the Evening primroses in Southern towns.

~~or~~ ari Calagos Mayoria, listening to the talk at Averrov tonight said the pitch is the same as the English — this is full of reasonable & well instructed remarks — as that Christ is never painted being washed; that the priests are allowed hairpins plates,

Una they wear their hair long & might be tempted into effeminate ornament. This was said by the garden where all the flowers were this morning – ranunculus like pink & violet shells many folded; the stepping black white specked irises. The other remark was made in the Byzantine Church at Daphni: "Oh awfully well – better than I'd any notion of" said Roger depositing his hat stick [illegible] & two or three guides & dictionaries on a pillar. Then we all stared up at the white vindictive Christ, larger than a nightmare, in blue & white mosaic on the ceiling. We liked that Church very much. It is [illegible] & rugged, & arched, & the mosaic is mostly peeled. And one looks out of the door at those tufted green trees which seem each tufted wide a sun lit & clouded wave – so beget so Dark are the green waves in the wood in which we walked. A Greek family keeps the church – middlesized men & women sitting in town clothes (the men) with overcoats & gold rings reading a paper at 3.30 – such idleness, such aimlessness I've never seen in England: at last the youngest, a woman, in shawl slippers & cotton dress, strolls off, climbs a ruined wall & begins to pick yellow flowers – nothing else to do. So we drove on down to the sea – & how lovely the pure lip of the sea is touching a wild shore; with hills behind; & green plains, & Eleusis in the distance & green, & red rocks, & one steamer starting.

22nd. April (as I think)

Never bitter cold. That one always forgets. The wind whistled through the uncovered sides of Grolmanns [?] Hupmobile [?]. L. sneezed: I shivered. All the floor was covered with painting boxes. We lunched on a table in the sun at Sunium — the chalk white pillars set high like a lighthouse. The flowers all in miniature made a bright turf — the uprooted like wires [?]. What did we say? Nothing much. After a week one talks only at dinner. And then drove home: that is through the ~~[illegible]~~ pleached trees, by the red shaped fields, with the sudden carpet of deep red poppies. Past the Gypsies huts, made like wigwams out of ... fern; there a girl wandered spinning from a lump of sheeps wool: a woman sat at the door — I thought of Piccadilly at this hour. How strange the perfectly [?] amenable flat land is, set with biblical trees, & with a house to be seen. This is England in the time of Chaucer grazed by long woolled sheep, — So at Sunium, the sea breaks upon green stone — red stone, & the slate coloured Hanbury sailed ships go by — ah as in the time of Chaucer, or Homer, not a pier, not a parade: none looking. At Salamis the Greek army were carrying little sacks of earth to the top of the Tomb of the dead soldiers to make it goodly. A tuft of flowers was on the top. Oh the cold, the cold.

29th April.

Oh the rain, the rain! That was next day at Aegina. That lovely, melody island with its paved narrow paths, the sea & the beach, the little pink & yellow houses, the shops, the steep pathways, the Temple, skeleton, dominant, the bays flowing filled with sea — all this was nothing but chill, mist, rain; americans clustering round a their professor; & we cowering under a pine tree which let the rain on us. Even so — Roger said awfully stock; this is superb — a sandstone temple better than Sunium. marvellous what genius can do in a little space — how the perfectly moving proportions — & the rain drove us down to our boat, as soon as we could. They had caught red fish & octopus. How? Well they put onions, bread — so on down, & the fish settle on them. Then they drop a charge & pouf! — it goes up like that, & the fish come to the top dead, & they spear them. Its not allowed. But nobody can see you, round there. Such was the account given by the stoker with the lovely fresh smile — the smile the muleteers have & the taximen — For R. & M. were mounted, & very queer they looked, jolting up the hill — the pole makria hole, as the bright faced girl called it. For

the people are desperately poor. & come, offering flowers, & are given the remains of lunch.
Today – how happy today was – at the little road Byzantine Church on the slopes of Hymettus. Why cant we live for ever like this, I said to myself, not that it was hot enough; but the rain blew over; & life seemed very free, & full of the good things – wildness, figs thyme smelling, cypresses, the little courtyard where L & M sat absorbed painting; with the great marble white dog asleep in a corner. & the usual frail slippered women padding about in their swallow rooms built upstairs, with old bits of carved marble for the door posts. I got a handful of wild anemones & orchids. One drives the dull part & scrambles when the ruts throw us too violently backward & forward.
Talk today about Max Eastman's book: Roger theories of art; & stories: M. tells stories of walking out a horse in Canada; of Julian life: of Mrs Mansfield – unwanted unintimate stories, for she has no foothold among us; & will slip off this rock into her obscure waters when we go back – not that she needs us. She is punctilious about trains, & has a passion for chase – We start tomorrow early for Nauplia, in a car.

Monday May 2nd.

Well it is five minutes to ten: but where am I, writing with pen & ink? Not in my study. In the gorge, or valley, at Delphi, under an olive tree, sitting on dry earth covered with white daisies. L. is reading her Greek grammar beside me: there goes, I think, a swallow tail. Shelves of grey rock rise opposite me, each set with olive tree, a little bushes, & if I follow up, there comes the huge bald grey & black mountain, & then the perfectly smooth sky. And so back to the hot earth, & the flies sitting in the yellow hearts of the daisies. There is a tinkling of goat bells; an old man has ridden off on his mule — we're right at the bottom of the hill on top of which is Delphi, & Thoby & Margery sketching. And a locust has just perched on the olive tree.

Then I try to make visible this scene which will soon be gone for ever & perhaps too try to avoid that demon which says, perhaps so unnecessarily that one ought to write down how we went to Corinth, Nauplia, Mycenae, to Mistra to Tripolitza, & so back to Athens, where the sun blazed, & I wore a silk dress, & we went to the gardens, & then started at 7 am Saturday morning for Delphi. I ought to write

about all these places, & to try perhaps to solidify some of these floating sequences that go through my mind as we drive. For the drives were very long, & the wind & the sun, & how one's lips cracked & blackened & cracked & one's nose peeled & one's cheeks were hot & dry as if sitting unshaded by a hot fire: all vanity has long died out. One is becoming a peasant. This reminds me of the start of joy with which I saw a tolerably well dressed woman in the salon at the Hotel Majestic drinking with a voluble old Greek gentleman the afternoon we came back. Dry dusty red, gold, black, brown, creased, (the wrinkles are marked like the stripes on the coat of a wild beast) after four or five days of the peasants & their solid draped beauty, the sharpness & subtlety of civilisation excite one's upper scale of nerves – the violin notes. Greece then, so to return to Greece, is a land so ancient that it is like wandering in the fields of the moon. Life is receding (in spite of that donkey) the living, these worn down, for ever travelling the roads Greeks, cannot make Greece any longer. It is too bare too stony, precipitous for them. We met them always on the high mountain passes padding along beside their donkeys, always so small, going so painfully, always marching in search of some herb, some

root, marooned by the vast distances, unable to do more than dig their heels in on the rock. Such solitude as they must know, under the sun, under the snow, such dependence on themselves to clothe & feed themselves through the splendid summer days is unthinkable in England. The centuries have left no trace. There is no 18th 16th, 15th century all in layers as in England — nothing between them & 300 B.C. 300 B.C. somehow dominated conquered Greece & still holds it. So its the country of the moon; I mean, lit by a dead sun. If one finds a bay it is deserted; so too with the hills & the valleys: not a villa, not a tea shop not a kennel anywhere: no towers, no churches, almost no graveyards.

But to be accurate Nauplia & Mycenae lie in a rich soft prosperous plain, there are even occasional villages, where we stop. R. & M. set out their paint boxes, because the accent is then right for painting — where there is a house: for then there are aspens & cypresses & roofs to stand against the plains & the mountains. What then happens (we've been a walk still further into the valley which still winds itself deeper & deeper, left leaves to mark the path, coming back lost it, peeled a stick for me & here we are, having shifted, owing to the sun, higher, under the olive tree; & I've taken of

my shoes (or woolens) what then happens is that the villagers come up & begin, like friends, to talk about things in general. Last night on the hill above Delphi in the evening light with the sea beginning to flash & sparkle by the sea, & one ship in the bay, & the snow mountains standing out in the background, & the foreground still running rich green & red brown, where the goats & sheep were grazing, & the cars passing slowly on the winding road beneath. Last night as we sat there, the goat girl came bounding up as if to seek her sheep but it was only to talk to us. No slinking past, no tittering, no shyness. She stopped before us, as a matter of course. L. made her look through his glasses, first the right way, then the wrong. Then She told her words for things. Skotos her rough thick coat, ouranos the sky, a flower, lululein (?) my watch orologe, the car — I've forgotten. She shouted with laughter. She was small brown, will make a shrewd broad old woman; unconstrained, friendly. Her brother came. 15, quick, shrewd, small eyed. I took his stick & water bottle. Then there was the difficulty about the coins. First she wouldnt take them or his handkerchief. Then followed us, patting her hand on her chest, asking complacently, but about what? L. repeated her gift. She took it. But not with joy. And the boy brought us a great

landscape of Yaot. & so home, with the electric lights coming out; & they danced after dinner in the public house, young men, punctiliously, bowing – twirling & keeping their feet on the right spot, dressed in trousers & shirts.

Half way up. It occurs to me that the ridge seen from the top is like a badly peeled pear, when lines of peel are left on the edges.

Also that Lawrence writes his books as I write this diary in gulps & jerks: & has not the strength to come down in one blow: no welding, no shaping – the result a false anti-literariness perhaps.

Also that the male virtues are never for themselves, but to be paid for. This introduces another element into this psychology – to be paid for: what will pay. This can be sublimated but the alloy remains. (I'm thinking of the book again)

Sunday May 5th.

Here it is, the last evening: very hot, very dusty. The loudspeaker is braying: L. reading, not with sympathy, Ethel Smyth: it is 2 minutes to 7 & therefore I have about 30 minutes in which to fill this book. I've only used 10 [illegible] 100 notes: my ink is still deep; how many white pages remain. This is the result of the best holiday these many years. It was so nice going off to the Post Office after our plain roll & honey: & it was so hot. & then there was always something doing. (I dont like Sundays, not even here: the little yellow cardboard looking boys are now drumming. & the dogs barking) We went to Aegina: grey & blue gradually rolling up the mist: & L & I found a desert bay lapped by water pale & pure — no — not pale — but pure as some liquid jelly. laid quivering over stones & shells. & anemones. L. went staggering

cut across the stones & they hung in: I paddled my 4 bare feet burnt on the sand. I dried them by letting them burn a minute. And this was virgin sea. At the island looked from the Temple like a South Sea island with naked natives gathering to see the boats come in. Here— where humanity grows & wages, & perhaps is allowed fuller expression, became sad by the number of donkeys provided. & we only took two. Here the [illegible] pulled my hands— Rode ride, they [illegible] very hot, very steep. So we pretended to shiver— said riding was too cold. And the children came pressing irises & yellow poppies. Even so, I shan't fill my book— Even by writing so quickly. I've scarcely read either— only Roger Eastman, & Wells, & Murray. Oh but I've thought too much, about my little book. The truth is this night being this day, as we've just sat, in the garden

& watching the whiskered maniac against the wall laughing, as if his insanity were merely too much ripeness, & the woman with gold teeth, & the love-struck boy who ate a chocolate cake, while he painfully commiserates the poverty of the Greeks, who look anxious, she says, & the hotel keeper she says has consumption — couldn't she give the bootblack our toast — oh yes, she can't resist the little boy with a roll of peppermints — this is her sufficiency, half Quaker, half virgin attitude to the "world" — as I was saying while I watch all this, I wonder what the hectic lady with rouged cheeks is laughing at — or at my straw hat trimmed of half its brim last night, or can it be Roger's paintboxes with which he's painfully slung — as I meditate such important events, as they slip & slide & catch on the surface of my mind, I'm subterraneously thinking in Sicilia for my little book:

make up arguments, see pictures. Keep stir dropping something new into the cauldron, which must bubble as richly as possible before it's poured & settled & hardened — as I do this, & accept whatever suggestion the tree-shaking cypresses & aspens, the orange flower smell, the man selling penny toys of monkeys on sticks offer me, time passes: I'm not sure if I'm in Greece or London: but, think it more likely I'm in Greece. Happy, easy, friendly with everything. Swimming easily forward. L. discussing pension reform with Marjorie, informing Roger about the break up of the atom: and then behold we come to a stop before an aviary. L. feeds picks a tassel of grass: & the budgerigar find it & peck it to bits. On we loaf again. Its and I say: odd why that khaki is — & R. says thats how they see the country: then we watch a medieval

soldiers in white leggings & tufted shoes. —
Kitty: R. has been painting in the Parthenon.
hadn't liked to ask him to sit. We
spent 3 hours a day eating says M.
M. wants to give away our pond says
L. & Roger runs across the road for it
these are our jokes: kindly sensitive jokes.
M. is still anxious of inferiority. likes to
talk of her parents & to palliate R's
levity. Would like to begin life again
I think What is lack of charm? ?
ask myself — Why dont these good
grabbers cut more ice? And
what's just untied the bunch in her 20
that she mothers? Yet has
every asset at command: can
command yacht to breed in her house:
travels: sketches: has sympathy far
more widely than I have for
beggars, children, state of the people.
But not charm.

Then I had the vision, a dogma of an
unlovely, but new reason to be bought

into our lives — how yearly we shall come here, with a tent, escaping England, & sloughing the respectable skin; & all the tightness & ~~formalit~~ formality of London: & fame & wealth: & go back & become irresponsible, livers, existing on the bread yaourt, butter, eggs, & egg in Crete. This is to some extent a genuine impulse. I thought, coming down the ~~mount~~ hill with Easy strides; London is not enough. Not Surrey either. One wants to be sunbaked, & taken back to these acquaintances friendly people, simply to live, to talk, not to read & write. And then I looked up & saw the mountains across the bay, knife shaped, coloured, & the sea, brimming smooth; & felt as if a knife had scraped some incrusted organ in me, for I could not find anything lacking in that ample, athletic beauty, steeped in colour, so that it was not cold,

perfectly free from vulgarity, yet old in human life, so that every inch has its wild flower that might grow in an English garden, & the peasants are gentle people: & their clothes, worn & faint, are subtly coloured, though coarse. Now there are sympathies between people & places, as between human beings. And I could love Greece, as an old woman, so I think, as I once loved Cornwall, as a child.
For this reason then, that we shall come back, & because L. wants to go to dinner, & I think there is a hair in my pen, I doubt that I shall make any more ceremony about coming to an end—
'Now get ready, dont talk so much—'.
I must end.

still the last night. & playing chess still with Roger, & I've lain in one of those interesting torpors on my bed, with Laurena to read, & have now written & cant but try to fix these last minutes for I – wish to be in them – if I can. The Greeks, who dont dine till 9, are now at it – others are chattering, hooting driving in the street – I hear them through our window opens on the back
It's a fine still night – Now & then a few simple words become audible – the top half of a building is [illegible] – Now the loudspeaker begins to with so real hoarsely through a few bars, & then suddenly stops. Everything rattles & jerks, as if someone a jumping ill-joined but rapid cart.
So the days in Athens will get hotter & hotter – tonight they were dining on the pavement at Costis – & the nights will get noisier & I forgot to write about the Sayer – all a glare – an oblong Parthenon yesterday – all a glare – an oblong of blue sky made oblong by white pillars – the compact rush of the Parthenon – a slip of shade along the Erechtheum, in which we sat – And a loose lipped goodtempered blue eyed man, lounged up

& said might be seen at Li Uick (the ringed em, bought at Sparta). So he picked at it & we said it was Greek. & he said no. It was a banana came from Canada – had never been made in Greece. From that he went on to talk about Greek peasants. To see how they live would make you cry he said. Always working & nothing to eat but black bread so hard you cant cut it, (this with emaciated gestures) & perhaps they make a little cheese & come & sell it cent there is plenty of wine always. So to the war. Everything has been wrong since then. Before the pound was stable & so was the drachma. Now one day theyre up: another down. What does sugar cost by the kilo in England? a kilo is 3 lbs: well, its cheaper in Greece. The government protect it. But anything that comes from abroad is dear – shoes, clothes. And we make hardly any ~~flour~~ flour. All this in tortured French, with the

young French officer sitting beside me & his wife — sister reading a guide book. A French battle ship was in the bay, & an Italian — Soon the English would come & the sailors would walk about the towers & say they had seen Greece — Indeed here came a guide leading the French sailors. Only French sailors would know the names of pediments & columns, said Roger, always in love with the French. The French would cook this better or do that better. Now the French president has been killed by a White Russian. M. pricks up his ears commercially & reflects intelligently what effect this will have on politics.
So we went to the hill which the Greeks called Philopappos, at in one gulp, but it was roped off, & we therefore turned back & went on to the theatre, with its carved marble seats each cut with the name of a priest seat holder as they stick cards on the ledges at old Covent Garden. One, the carved one, the lion one, was for the priest of Dionysos, & had a

carving of goats prancing & vines pendant.
Here I sat & we said that Sophocles
Euripides & Aristophanes must have sat here
& seen — anyhow the hills were before
them, as before us. And if the 2000 years
have laid a few light rubbishy stucco
houses on the earth, in the way, very
little has been done to damage the view —
nothing solid & immense & lasting
has been built. Poverty & war & misery
have prevented any obliteration — here as
elsewhere. Indeed we might ask for
more care, & more custody, not less.
This afternoon the Greek ragamuffin
boys were slinging stones at a marble
carved arch, & pitting it, so that in
some years it will be irrecoverably
damaged. And the graves are robbed,
tin-canned, dirty, desolate. Though
the Greeks made the tombs with their
own hands — no the land is too
exhausted even to guard its own interests
anyhow — no doubt Lord Elgin's
excuse for stealing the statues from
the Parthenon & the pillar from the

tomb of Agamemnon at Mycenae. Still L. plays chess & it is nearly twelve. but Athens shows no sign of sleep. so I cant complain. A howling whistling sound is made by the trams. This time tomorrow we shall be nearing Salonika: I shall be turning in my shelf. L. on his, & so for 3 nights till we reach Rodmell & sleep in our soft beds, in the cool English May.

May 10th. Only the most hardened scribbler could attempt to write in the Orient Express — for the letters are might all going head & tails. Here we are, 10.30, in Jugo Slavia, a far more subjugated country than Greece, the last glimpse of which we saw last night — crossing a terrible stone gorge on a crazy bridge — looking down till I quivered from our window. sitting down to dinner with Venus colliding with the moon: & a shepherds hut, & two men in long coats lit up by the electric lights of the restaurant car. &c. curious contrasts! Our rattling & cerebral drawing all compact through want, novelty, desolation.

shepherds, sheep, torrents, lonely rivers winding through rocks. We dined, on the real smoke grey china. Austrian birds & swans on board. Gathered in the salon at the Skopje were all their friends some with boxes of chocolate. She said in English "Looking through my things I found this belt" & gave it to the young man with the chocolate. Joy. A few sentences — the really intimate — acts — confidential? — in English: then a batter of Greek again. A language one doesn't understand is always unaccented, sibyllant, soft, wavy, undistinguishable into words. Last night was bad. Very hot. Then interruptions. At Salonika (1-20) they came in to ask about money. We had been advised to hide all of it for drachmas — which all the collectors kept back they said. An unfortunate idea — so we dispersed them all over — in the pockets of Baedeker, in an envelope. But the same question. So on. Yugoslavia. Stopping & starting all night. Woke & washed, looking at mountains. But the train had chugged back to we had to wait 2 hours for coffee. Now for Rob Steak.

11th
May

again this heroism in the attempt at
Ken's work; but I am tired of reading
Rousseau's [illegible]; & we have
just said that by this time tomorrow
we shall be in Mecklenburgh. L.
will be talking to Pinka. As it is,
we are trotting & rattling through Lombardy
toward the Alps: & these [illegible]
near Paris. This a flat country
between small red houses. All
is [illegible] & [illegible] the green.
We went out in the rain & walked
up the broad [illegible] street at [illegible]
Belgrade yesterday: we saw nothing
very tall men in tight pelting clothes:
two women in [illegible] [illegible] &
Turkish handkerchiefs; & so
back to the train. Again we
seem to be in the same way the
drowsy but going into the sea of
setting & back to, there attached
ourselves to England by buying the Times.
The paper read empty & provincial —
these good Englishmen [illegible]
bothering about little ideas, [illegible]
alone at the time this in Athens & the
Greek islands. [illegible]
now & to come. I stop

And now, Whit Sunday, here we are at Monks House, & Greece is perceptibly melting. Yet for a moment England & Greece stood side by side, each much enlivened by the other. When we landed, the English coast seemed long low sweeping empty. I exclaimed at the extraordinary English green — with its yellow mixture: & L. said the earth had an unbaked look — no red in it; & the lines of the hills so sloping. Now our road seems a garden path. But this was Greece still active in our eyes. But its force is waning. Already my mind is hard at work (in my absence) arranging, editing, bringing forward, eliminating, until it will present me, unasked, with visions; or jewels, of Aegina, of Athens — the Acropolis with the incandescent pillars: the view from the goatherds hill at Delphi — no, the process is not yet complete. Enough for me to have detached pictures. Last night going to Charleston has further strewn sand over Greece. And my head has settled down; & my body is rapidly using itself to arm chairs & soft beds & English meat & jam.

Tuesday 17th May.

What ~~should~~ is be the right attitude towards criticism? What ought I to feel & say when Miss B. devotes an article in Scrutiny to attacking me? She is young, Cambridge, ardent. And she says I'm a very bad writer. Now I think the thing to do is to note the pith of what is said —that I dont think— then to use the little kick of energy which opposition supplies to be more vigorously oneself. It is perhaps true that my reputation will now decline. I shall be laughed at & pointed at. What should be my attitude—clearly Arnold Bennett & Wells took the criticism of their youngers in the wrong way. The right way is not to resent; not to be longsuffering & Christian & submissive either. Of course, with my odd mixture of extreme rashness & modesty (to analyse roughly) I very soon recover from praise & blame. But I want to find out an attitude. The most important thing is not to think very much about oneself. To investigate candidly the charge: but not fussily, not very anxiously. On no account to retaliate by going to the other extreme— thinking too much. And now that thorn is out— perhaps too easily. But then of course John interrupted. John has interrupted to some purpose. At last upset him put his case for him & against the irascible Leonard & the hard work & the underpay. And today we have to discuss with him his 'feeling'— I'm not theatrically sympathetic; thinking of all the time was spent. And Hilda M. lunches tomorrow with a view to— Oh dear, the Press, the Press— how much time it has cost us.

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Here is a better scene, that I should write, bored as I am with refurbishing Dickens.

Yesterday we were driving home. As we came to Mortlake Bridge I saw some heads bobbing in the river. I thought they were boys bathing; & thought it odd: they bathe on Sunday under a bridge! And then I saw an boat flopping on its side; & then a crowd; & then pulling two & two together realised that this silent bobbing scene meant that here was an accident. We stopped & got out & watched three or four people swimming very slowly in full dress the few yards to shore. Then a sound of moaning & sobbing was heard. Nobody moved. Nobody was excited or anxious. One red faced dishevelled woman was lying on her back. A man was patting & pulling her. At last they touched shore; & a big bronzed elderly man scrambled up the steep bank, ran quickly, dripping in black trousers plastered to his legs, out to the parapet, where he had left a hat & an overcoat. It was a sordid, silent, spectacle — this horrid rescue. Middle class people in full Sunday dress immersed in cold water. I thought of a picture of a miracle; people fully dressed floating: there was a touch of the grotesque; none of terror or sublimity. The boat lay like a log boat, on its side.

So home; & Helen is writing; & therefore. Late last night John comes & renews his application. The mixture of emotionalism & grasping is so odd. as hard as nails. & then quivering.

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Wednesday 25th May

Now I have 'finished' David Copperfield, & I say to myself Cant I escape to some pleasanter atmosphere? Cant I Expand & embalm & become a sentient living creature! Lord how I suffer! What a terrific capacity I possess for feeling with intensity—now, since we came back, I'm screwed up into a ball: cant get into step: cant make things dance: feel awfully detached: see youth: feel old: no thats not quite it: wonder how a year or 20 perhaps is to be endured. Think yet people do live: cant imagine what goes on behind faces. All is surface hard; myself only an organ that takes blows, one after another: the horror of the hard raddled faces in the flower show yesterday: the inane pointlessness of all this existence: hatred of my own brainlessness & indecision: the old treadmill feeling, of going on & on & on: for no reason—Lytton's death: all that Carrington—a longing to speak to him: all that cut away, gone: Eddy's idiotic letter: the peevishness & egotism of Eddy: of John: the hardness & competitiveness of life: no space where one can expand in & say Time stand still here: L's goodness & firmness: & the immense responsibility that rests on him: what to do about the press, about Hilda, about John: shall I women: my book on professions: write another novel: contempt for my lack of intellectual power: reading Wells without understanding: Nessa's children; society; buying clothes: Rodmell spoilt: all England spoilt: terror at night of things generally wrong in the universe; buying clothes: how I hate Bond Street & spending money on clothes: worst of all is this dejected barrenness. And my eyes hurt: & my hand trembles.

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A saying of Leonard's comes into my head in this season of complete inanity & boredom "Things have gone wrong somehow" It was the night Carrington killed herself. We were walking along that silent blue street with the scaffolding. I saw all the violence & unreason crossing in the air: ourselves small; a tumult outside: something terrifying: our unreason — Shall I make something terrifying: our unreason — Shall I make a book out of this? It would be a way of bringing order & speed again into my world.

Thursday May 26th

And now today suddenly the weight on my head is lifted. I can think, reason, keep to one thing, & concentrate. Perhaps this is the beginning of another spurt. Perhaps I owe it to my conversation with L. last night. I tried to analyse my depression: how my brain is jaded with the conflict within of two types of thought, the critical, the creative: how I am harassed by the strife & jar & uncertainty without. This morning the inner of my head feels cool & smooth instead of strained & turbulent.

Last night at Adrian's evening. Zuckerman an ape. Dora Chapman sitting on the floor — I afraid of Lady coming in — I wrote him a sharp, but well turned letter — will talk of Adrian so curiously reminiscent — will talk of his school of Greece of the past as if nothing had happened in between: a queer psychological fact in him — this dwelling in the past, when there is his present & his future all round him: K.C. to wit, & Karin coming in late, predacious, stree-ffling, never amenable or comforting as poor women no doubt she knows: deaf, twisted, gnarled, short, stockish, — all babbled. Still she comes. Dick Strachey. There are odd elements of a party not mingling. Duncan wanders off. Nessa L. & I talk with some effort.

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gone to Tarzan. We met James & Alix on the door. Come—dine by James, with the desire strong wh. I think to keep hold of Lytton. Monkeys can discriminate between light & dark: dogs cant. Tarzan is made largely of human apes. People have libraries of wild beast 'shots' let out a lion. Question how the lion fight was done. Real. Probably the lion was doped or had its claws cut. Talk of Greece. Talk of Spain: Duck was taken for a ghost. A feeling of distance & remoteness. Adrian sepulchral, hollow, emaciated, elongated, scientific. Called Adrian by Lolly; then in come rather small women, Hughes, & I think his wife. We evaporate at 11.20: courteously thanked for coming by Adrian. Question what pleasure these parties give. Some, presumably, or these singular figures wouldn't coagulate. A pouring wet day, & we're off to Rodmell for the week end. As for the Press, we're to see Harold's woman on Tuesday & contemplate a re-arrangement: no John. no Hilda. but competent underlings: Belsher coming back after her holiday. Now for more articles. But I think one fortnight will see me through.

Wed 1st June

[Derby day.] Oh dear, oh dear, I dont like dining with Clive—not altogether. It is true I conquered at 8. my profound trepidation about my clothes—"I wont wear my new dress I said, in case I should be laughed at". This philosophy shivered on the doorstep, when I saw two 20 horse power cars drawn up, apparently, at her door. Again I fluctuated & shivered, like a blown candle flame, when I came in & found only Hearne, grubby inarticulate Rex Whistler. Then Lord why have I dined at all Talked—

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David, then Rex Whistler. then Mrs Quennell — that all. So to dinner. And the boasting! Clive rattling out noble names. Memories of Leeds, & Godolphin: how Jack Lord Carmarthen was engaged to Mary Baker: how the Duchess gondoled with the deaf Mrs. Baker: but I played my tricks. Jumped over the candlestick: & cooperated with Anne in the flatterment of

deaf

impressing, I think it was. Mrs Quennell — She could only remember diplomatic society in Tokio. Clive languished in the Embassy at Rome. Lady — I've forgotten her name. Oh of course, Cynthia Graham". Then, drawing room after dinner, he put me through my paces about Eddy. "But you've And he became teasing, malicious; & he said never known anything — once you were out of your mind — that's all": & he said "Now tell the truth. You were extremely disagreeable to Eddy ..." "Well, well: these little barbs only scratched the surface; & there were moments of brilliant sheeny which I enjoyed; when I said it's far better to be here, rubbing my wits with these charming people than reading Rousseau in my drawing room: then I revoked that opinion; then I floated again: then I landed on the scrannels. No, I don't think I like Clive's parties anymore — though they're flowery enough. I pick up too many thorns. His oblique method of one way & another. His jetting his own back always exacerbates. His own — what did I steal 20 years ago that he should never feel the debt paid? Anyhow, why not refuse the next party, & ruminate on my own? My own life is full enough: Mary. Christabel. Ld David tonight. Peter Lucas. Ethel tomorrow: &c.

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Lord David's party last night. Hung across London – Derby night.
Great motor full of men with buttonholes. A nice pert
girl tripping across 5th Avenue hand in hand with –
young man: all fluff & roses. Edwardes Sqre very
large leafy silent Georgian refuge: do two no 41
with its white & green; its one point — but nothing
definite enough for my taste: Ly Salisbury by Sargent
over the mantelpiece; a butler; an orange cat; Ld D.
& Eli Bowen talking by the fire: then Puffin, then
John Sparrow. Not a good dinner: meagre: ingenious:
& I took too many asparagus. All about Kind men
talk – the note of the Asquiths & Cecils. 'How very true' —
Yes. I agree entirely' — so different from B.G.
Theres more body to us. Still I dont complain.
a little confabulation about Eddy: then about
crying at crowds, at theatres, at films: what is
tragic: what about football. Sp: is a balder. a
jolted young man, just called to Chancery Bar
who writes a life of Donne after dinner.
Talk about Auden. Naomi Mitchison: her reverence of
Auden read aloud: Acrophe "& all that lot".
How she went to a party with corn in her hair.
how her group knocks people down: how they dig in
the Ellis's hotel: how she loves, poses, writes
but its not really good, says David. Then they
talked about the German youth movement: about
bad people about — Lindsay who likes lice in
the head; about Murry; & I wore my new
dress, too white & young perhaps: & so came home
across London. & must now wait for Maynard
lunch & the Bernard Shaws — oh damn, oh
damn — not an idea in my head or a wish to
be bothered

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I dont like old ladies who guzzle — my comment upon Ethel Smyth last night — no doubt a harsh one — But she champed & chopped: & squabbled over her duck: & then was over calm, & had to go home.

My comment upon the Shaws:
he said: "I am not sufficiently loved generally to wish for immortality. I should like to be different. I should like to be a performer in music, & a mathematician. So I dont keep a diary. I do destroy all my letters.
So did
He had had letters from every great man. He took them out in the garden & burnt them. But I couldnt burn Ellen Terry. They were works of art. It would have been like burning a page of the Luttrell Psalter. The handwriting was a work of art. She scribbled them — never thought of a phrase. But I admit that ~~in~~ when our correspondence was published I thought — I admit — I shall be the hero: not a bit of it: I have to admit that Ellen was the ~~b~~ superior. She is coming out for the better of the two. Frank Harris — his life of me was a life of himself. Theres no truth in it about me. No life of me has a word of truth in it. They say my father was persecuted, & that I was persecuted as a boy sent to a Wesleyan school. Desmond MacCarthy says he's going to write my life — well, he may say so. He comes & talks — I cant tell the truth yet about myself. The Webbs looked lonely somehow going off to Russia. He's ~~Webb~~ is out of glory old — no, I dont find that. You see I've always quarrelled with the Webbs. Webb has a peculiar faculty for absorbing information. He could have gone to Oxford — found some flaw in the Hebrew — proved it to the Jesuit examiners: But didnt go — only wanted to be in the right. And

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And so, when I first knew him, I had to overcome an immense amount of useless knowledge. He had to forget things he had learnt. I always tell a story to illustrate this — when I was a boy I asked my father "what is an Unitarian". And he thought for a time & then he said, "Unitarians believe that after Christ was crucified he got down off the Cross & ran away on the other side of the hill." Years later, when I was 30 or so, I was staying with the Trevelyans at Wellcombe & the talk got upon Unitarians & it flashed upon me this cannot be the true story — but I'd always seen Christ running down the hill all those years. Webb would be much more effective if he'd one drop of the artist. But he has not one. Beatrice is in despair about it. Can't make a good speech therefore. People think my style as speaker is spontaneous colloquial. It's the most artificial ever known. I've taken long railway journeys & spent them saying the letters of the alphabet aloud so as to make my vowels strike out. Then they say I'm a Frenchman — I think quicker than the English. No I don't make things up — when I write history I don't make things up — I imagine the sort of things people would have done & then I say they did them & then I find out facts — are always so — for that proves it. The great pleasure of the Broadcasting to me is that I can sit at home & conduct the orchestra & singers myself. I sit with the book of the score & conduct & I'm furious when they don't follow me. That way one finds how often the singers make howlers — come in a bar early or late. Beecham — choose the — I heard that — sang a piece of the Magic Flute which is solemn, slow, processional — into a hornpipe. I leapt up in my seat. The leapt up. I shall never his knees & clasped them in agony — he is never still a moment — he clenches his fists — he

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(I skipped this page — so much [illegible] have I
heard Maynard ~~tell~~ say to Mr Shaw "Well, we're about
as bad as we can be. Never been so bad. We
may go over the Edge — but as its never been like
this, nobody knows. One would say we must" which
was uttered in the low tone of a doctor saying a
man was dying in the next room, but didnt
want to distract the company. This referred
to the state of Europe, while we lunched —
very well too.

4th June. And last night we stopped the car in Hyde Park &
watched & a people on the verge of ruin. How many
Rolls Royces, & other low, pink, yellow, very
powerful cars weren't booming through the park
like giant dor-beetles, with luxurious
owners, men & women, lying back, on their way to some
party. A Rolls Royce means £5000 a year.
Then the children in perambulators with nurses. Then the
strollers & saunterers. Then the mauve grey green trees,
flushed with livid pinks & yellows; the may & the
laburnum ~~dripping~~ scarcely bursting, like colour
under water that cloudy, racing, thunder yellow
evening. So back through the West End —
more cars blocked; & we on the verge of

[illegible].

This is written, not so much for the sake of its
historical interest, as to get the taste of
Madame Bolotine's memoirs out of my mouth.
The influence is perceptible. Queer, the pervasiveness
of bad writing. And still queer, the fact
that this smoothed, unreal bad lady writer, [illegible]
book is dearer to the writer than a child, has to be
delivered by hand, & is the record of a tempestuous
violent Russian life — yet feebler than Mrs Bartholomew's
memoirs.

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thing humbly their way. Then: he sprang up to go as if he were 22, not 74 as L. remarked. What life. what vitality! what immense nervous spring! That perhaps is his genius. Immense vitality — & why I dont read him for pleasure — His face is bright red; his nose tumbles; his eyes sea green like a sailors or a cockatoos. He doesnt much notice who's there — Told stories about the fortunes of plays to Maynard who was rung up 3 or 4 times at lunch by his colleague Colleagues at the Savoy. The ballet starts on Monday & he has no return yet with crash or flourish — People no longer book ahead. Shaw said they used to book 6 weeks ahead.

Last night, Sunday, dining at Clive. Just back from Wilsford. Clive crown with Lottie Bunn. Good tempered. Nessa heating dinner. C. crown with too many dishes — too much fuss — does the rakkiis into shaker — chatter. gossip: ballet; attack on Bolitho's Prince Consort; Quentin thinks Emperor Napoleon attractive: Clive swears he's wrong: story of Mérimée in love with the Empress mother: so to Tommy & Raymond — some acrimony. Duncan says "Raymond needs an arboreous back!" Never says T. wd. appreciate that; Raymond wounded: I say T. is a scratchy jade, ought to be happy in a lovely young wife; Nessa laughs; they say that the young — he I get happily. What worse torture?, says Clive. One would agree to try living with her in Lambs Conduit St. & then the memory of happier days (always theirs lyrical about lovers) And he's falling flat says Nessa: Angus no longer loves him, nor Barbara. Raymond can make a story out of life T. cant, I say. Oh but he can, for all his sitting in public houses. says Nessa. Raymond only sits in drawing rooms, says Roger E.D. testy. (She has been testy about Carrie's gossip) bed: a man says I lunched with Mrs — & she has scarcely built [illegible] I [illegible]

Back from a good week end at Rodmell — a week end of no
talking, sinking at once into deep safe book reading; & then
sleep: clear transparent: with the may tree like a breaking
wave outside; & all the garden green tunnels, mounds of
green: & then to wake into the hot still day, & never a
person to be seen, never an interruption: the place to
ourselves: the long hours. To celebrate the
occasion I bought a little desk & L. a beehive. & we
drove to the bay; & I did my best to not to see the
cement sheds. The bees swarmed. Sitting after
lunch we heard them outside; & on Sunday there
they were again: hanging in a quivering thing brown black
from Mrs Thomsetts tombstone. We
gave to Mrs Thomsetts tombstone. Percy
leapt about in the long grass of the graves,
all dressed up in macintosh, & netted hat.
Bees shoot wings, like arrows of desire:
fierce, sexual; weaving cats cradles in the air: each
whizzing from a string: the whole air full of
vibration: of beauty, of this burning arrowy
desire: & speed: I still think the quivering
shifting bee bag the most sexual & sensual
symbol. So home, through vapour, tunnel
cavern of green: with pink & yellow glass
mounds in garden — rhododendron. To
Nessa: Adrian has told Karin that he must
separate. She demurs. They are to start
separate houses, he says, in the autumn.
Last week was such a scrimmage: oh so many
people: among them Doris. Adrian: she like a
dogfish: that circular slit of a mouth in a
pale flesh: & an ugly ragged dress: but said by
Nessa to be nice — why the bees should swarm
round her, I cant say. Now Vita rings up:
May she & Harold dine tonight: then Ethel: I
look ahead to say Whitsuns weekend.

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Saturday June 19.

Adrian rings up & says "Can you suggest a tenant for two rooms? We're in the throes of dividing things up." Whether he goes, & Karin stays, I dont know. John stays, on a reversed basis, as adviser; Miss Scott Johnson as permanent manager; & I am to consult & help John more, & not sit here "with a red cross on your door so that I darent come in." My advice is that he shall be more malleable, & less pernickety. He craves influence & authority; & to publish the books of his friends; wishes to start a magazine; is poor; ~~cant do without our pay~~; must economise; lives with Peggy in Pimlico. Am I too aloof—partly so as not to chatter, partly to get to my own work? Ought one to be more sympathetic; but oh so many people to see & things to fit in already; nevertheless I'll try, if the new method is to be tried. He says Leonard is "so deep, & plans things; & never comes out at once with what he means; so that I dont know how to behave." I daresay we've spent 10 hours talking about all this. Ethel more than usually controlled. Headaches & skirmishing. Oh & I'm finishing the C.R. I trust to God; have done the last article, & hope to send off to be typed tomorrow. Desmonds criticism rather sends my value up in my eyes: cant make a dint in a hat of butter. "man of the word." Respectable. acute; astute, to the point. Nessa & Duncan's private view. Tatlock smelling of drink. Stony arty people. Agnes. Mrs Grant. Mrs Rendel all this morning round the pictures—& I meeting Ethel in Electric blue & spangles: & she telling us at Stewarts how Mrs Liddell rolled down the steps at Marlborough House dead drunk

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24th June. on the verge of going lost negligibly dip at Monks House. Dinner at
the Hutchinsons last night: sat between Desmond & Lord
Balniel. Lord & Lady Derwent also there: & Lord
David only absent because of a sprained ankle: & Lord
Chichester ringing up. 'So good for Leonard" Jack said.
all these Lords." A certain thin spread tightness in the
talk. Champagne necessary. Two footmen. Lady
Balniel simple hard direct plain confident young with
children. aristocratic. Desmond back from Cambridge —
Abbott. Very cheerful: & I think his book so bad: How
then can he be cheerful? The thin stretched whipped
up Champagne talk was about — oh, I said to
Lord B. some nonsense about pictures: & he said
my writing (I'm so well known now) was more real
than his politics. "I go about in my wifes country,
up in Lancashire: I meet the oddest people: very nice:
we talk: I've got to make a speech at a bazaar about
the Christian attitude to the un-employment
question. What does it mean? And so dont get
much time for pictures. David Cecil & I always
loved pictures, even at Eton." Lady D. Roumanian,
passionate, dumb. Jack small talk with Lady B.
Mary expanding about Sadlers Wells to B. about
Courthauld. B. smoking a cheroot. D. saying
what it felt like to be sick. So to the Zoo:
a meat swing: white bear elongated like
El Grecos: stinking meat held near my nose: white
bear bit a boy's arm off: bear dived: white
explosion: red & yellow fairy lamps: distant
music; the sea lions, rushing like torpedoes,
flouncing up the rocks: in silk coats; the blind
bear: one swollen white eye; bored sleepy
under the livid green; baby sea lions
like puppies: Mary tipping the man: he regual
response: home with Desmond till 1.

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Tuesday 28th June

Just "finished De Quincey" Thus am I trying to keep pace with the days & deliver the 2nd C.R. done on the last of June — which I see with dismay is Thursday. I spent last summer thus toiling over the Waves. This — has been severe by a long chalk (whats the origin of that? Cricket pitch? billiards?) Anyhow it blazes: it swoons: the heat. Royal, imperial, are the words I fumble with in the Square. So hot yesterday — so hot, when Prince Mirsky came with his dubious fluent Russian lady: I mean she was full of temperament: had the free gestures of the Slav: but Mirsky was trap mouthed: opened & bit his remarks to pieces: has yellow misplaced teeth: wrinkles his forehead; despair, suffering, very marked on his face. Has been in England, in boarding houses for 12 years; now returns to Russia 'for ever'. I thought, as I watched his eye brighten — fade — soon there'll be a bullet through your head. That's one of the results of war: this trapped cabin'd man. But that didn't lubricate our tea. Vita came in; then Alix: both relieved of their books (Vita's is said to be bad) & so rather Elated. Vita is driving west, alone, for 4 days today. An American has offered her £250 for 2,000 words: & will offer the same to me. I doubt it. Alix like a Red Indian: so large boned, & with wrinkles, & sunburn like an Indians. And tonight, to my considerable alarm, at opening an entirely new door, into an entirely new room, I dine with Katharine Furse. So

And here's Morgan come to lunch.

Enough.

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29th June

The room was a very sumptuous room; a wide staircase led to it; a broad hall. I was early. "What a magnificent cabinet!" I said to hide my nervousness. with this old charwoman in the light seen a black stocking: all her hair has shrunk. She has the hardened, lined, drawn face of a very unhappy woman. Why, in that light she looked terrible to me. Where had the handsome Katharine gone: she who strode: had firm red cheeks: & was decorous, masterly controlled even in the first pinch of her unhappiness? Heavens, what an injury life inflicts! To have replaced that dashing youth with this almost intolerable look of suffering: grudging look: a scraped bare look: the ugly poor woman look. By dint of arrangement, by looking through half closed eyes I could, as the evening wore on & the light faded piece together something fine: her eyes: small but penetrating: her gestures — they are still free & bold, though so much hampered by bare arms & tight ugly black & blue dress: what is fine is that she conceals nothing: has no shrinking left; has been wrung & mangled out of the softnesses & sensibilities. How white her face is, too: yet she commanded her table — her & Folletts table — with the old mastery: but as if nothing gave her any pleasure. She never relaxed. Never lost her look of suffering the whole evening. To harden & blunt & coarsen that is the worst damage age — & I daresay she's only 8 years older than I am — can inflict. Is this all Charles' death? or what? The talk stuttered & stumbled. a dry peevish old pepperbox called Cabot, professor of Harvard, his vague wife, Mary Follett, verbose, effuse

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that was the party; & we sat & let the light turn grey & cold & all the cabinets grow dim — all very elderly & ugly. Was that contained in my dismay with Katharine — the sense I look like that too. Perhaps. Then Leonard came in, in his grey suit & blue tie, sunburnt; & I felt that we were still vigorous & young. And so kissed Katharine the old woman on the doorstep. Yes, last time we met she was driving a dog cart: & it was a cold winters day. She was going to the Docks to look at treasure.

Whenever I suck my pen, my lip is covered with ink. And I have no ink with which to fill my pot; & it is 10 minutes past 12; & I have just finished Hardy; & I promise myself that the C. R. will be finally done by Wednesday next. And today is Sunday. Last night at 10 the Zeppelin came past with a strange light hanging from its navel. This consoled me for not having gone to the last night of the ballet. Now I have cleaned my table, to which John objects while I'm away. And I should now attack A. Ronelle. But Lord, how tired one gets of one's own writing.

Today is Wednesday & the CR I confess is not yet quite done. But then — well I had to re-write the last article, which I had thought so good, entirely. Not for many years shall I collect another bunch of articles. Many many people, too, & parties still to be transacted. On Sunday the Barocci; he detached ironic Jakes: She intense, worried, unattractive rather; money trouble; war loan investments vanished: Shaftes

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left with £80 income. But we shall go to Spain in Septr.
said Simon. Then to Angelica, passing the funeral in
Epping forest; Nessa made her dress for the ballet party
sitting in a field after lunch, while Quentin & Angelica
wandered & L. made up an article. Spoke to an old
man in a hedge. Then Adrian came on Sunday
night. garrulous & cheerful. talking Sicilian: then we
dined with the Jameses: Alix Red Indian: James
trying to extend a feeler from his hard nut. I'm an old
friend. Lyttons friend. Will we choose books. He
Carrington lied to him the night before Lytton died:
said she would not kill herself; was found unconscious in
the car later. How regular your works are I said.
a mere weed. he said giddily in Lyttons way

These days have been very hot. & very busy: books out tomorrow,
Plomer, my letter & Hughs.

And so I fainted, at the Lodge: & had to be led out by
Clive. a curious sensation feeling it come on: sitting
still & fading out. Then Clive trying pose & a woman
with salts. And the odd liberation of emotion in
the cab with Clive: & the absolute delight of dark-
bed: after that stony rattling & heat. & Frankie's
shouting: & things being churned up, removed.
I write this on a ~~hot~~ blazing morning, & because
L. is instructing Mrs C. how to arrange the books
so that I cant correct article "Everywhen")
Either the Nation
look everything is hopeless.... — or it ought to be
Days ought not to be here at all (John & M: squabbling day
in the other room ...
yesterday: Harold drivelling snapping, when)
looked for 'serious criticism' — why go on hoping?)
The whole of whats going over — Here are 3
things of Nature here no time, yet — we dont sell —
copy a year...

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Oh dear, I've twenty minutes to use; & cant 'correct' any more. What a fling I shall have into fiction & freedom when this is off! At once, an American comes to ask me to consider writing articles for some huge figure. And (hushed be this said) I sent Nessa a cheque for £100 last night: & Leonard gave his mother £50, & Philip £50. These are among the solid good things, I think. Nessa's £100 will bring her some release from worry, I hope. Clive saying they must spend £600 a year less. Roger to have his operation, said to be slight, tomorrow. Adrian fretted to death — almost to fainting in the street — must afterwards stumble on to Nessa's & ask for water — then spend the evening — by the resources of her doris. This — what Francis foreboded: a pit of dubious morality, & to me to like a codfish in her person. And there are fleas at M.H. to which we go: & black beetles here, & said to be mice also.

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Sunday 11th July

I will take a new pen & a new page to record the fact which is now a fact that I have slipped a green rubber band round the ~~Lilian~~ Common Reader. Second Series, & there it lies, at 10 minutes to one, ready to take upstairs. There is no sense of glory; only of drudgery done. And yet I daresay its a nice enough book to read — I doubt that I shall write another like it all the same. I must find a quicker cut into books than this. But heaven be praised, not now. Now I'm taking a holiday. That is to say, what shall I write tomorrow? I can sit down & think.

Wednesday

I have been sleeping over a promising novel. Thats the way to write. Its a livid hot day; & Clive has been summoned to take Mary Baker to Glyndebourne — Oh dont think me too frivolous — & may I know who was coming — what young lady — & we've got Morgan instead — a change all to L's liking. Almost our last party. I'm ruminating as usual, how to improve my lot: & shall begin by walking alone, in Regents Park this afternoon. What I mean is why do a single thing one doesnt want to do — for instance buy a hat — read a book? Old Joseph Wright & old Lizzie Wright are people I respect. Indeed I do hope the 2nd vol. will come this morning. He was a maker of dialect dictionaries: he was a workhouse boy — his mother went charing. And he married Miss Lea a clergyman's daughter. And I've just read their love letters with respect. And he said "Always please yourself — then one person's happy at any rate" And she said — get proportions make details part of a whole —

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right" — contemplating marriage with Joe. Odd how rare
to meet people who say things that we ourselves could have
said. Their attitude to life much our own. Joe a very
thick sturdy man — 'I am eminent in certain respects' he said.
We must have some record of Joe & Lizzie to posterity'.
Had his old working mother to Oxford. She thought
All Souls would make a good Co-op. Had a fist-
struck boys. His notion of learning. What is it? Something
would like to be learned myself: about sounds &
dialects. Still what use is it? I mean, if you have that
mind why not make something beautiful? Yes, but
then the triumph of learning is that it leaves something
done solidly for ever — Everybody knows now about
dialect, owing to his Dictionary. He is a coarse, sturdy
variety of Sidney Webb & Walter Leaf — stocky
hairy: more humorous & forcible than either. Could
work all night, wash, & work all next day. Miss
Weisse, Tovey's lady, brought them together — made
Lizzie give up arranging the flowers in the Rectory
& go to Oxford. She a woman of character. Wouldn't
accept Joe's offer of a job because he made her feel
like a bear at the end of a chain. But she
married him. They were lost in the woods by
Vyrnwy Water in 1896: & sat on a seat & had an
hour of great suffering, after which she accepted him —
they got in a baker's cart, were taken back to Miss
Weisse. An absorbing story. Joe knew all about
servants. Joe taught himself to read at 14: taught
mill boys in a bed room for 2d a week: a surly
but very sensitive man, apparently. Now this is
a testimony to Joe & Lizzie that I've been
thinking how I should have liked to see them —
would now like to write to her. A fine face
with bright big eyes — yes — but what
happens in volume two?

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Thursday
14th
July

'Immunity' I said to myself half an hour ago, lying back in my chair. That's the state I am [or was] in. And its a holy, calm, satisfactory flawless feeling — To be immune, means to exist apart from rubs, shocks, suffering; to be beyond the range of darts: to have enough to live on without courting flattery success: not to need to accept invitations: not to mind other people being praised: to feel This — to sit & breathe behind my screen, alone, is enough: to be strong: content: to let Nessa & D. go to Paris without envy: to feel no ones thinking of me: to feel I have done certain things & can be quiet now: to be mistress of my hours; to feel detached from all gossips about me; & claims on me; to be glad of lunching alone with Leonard; to have a space of time this afternoon: to read Coleridges letters. Immunity is an exalted calm desirable state, & one I could reach much oftener than I do.

Stella Benson last night: as quiet, as controlled, white, drawn as usual. also deaf. with steady honest eyes: said she had been to a great many parties. "I must say nothing. I feel none of these people matters. They say how much they liked my book .. Iwan given a medal. The old gentleman couldnt remember what for. He pinned it on. Both my dogs are dead. I liked one for bounding. But that was only a sign of Stannards disease. I go back in August — to Lin Lon (or some such name) a mud island. Thats Hong Kong. They play games. At Government House they give you a slip of paper with names of games on it. You have to put a cross next the one you play. Setting out is one — James & I chose that. So we set out together." That was her style in a very weak but persistent voice.

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the coughs; & then goes on with a mild persistent patience. She is bleached: even her blue eyes are bleached. But at the same time she's practical; realistic: talks, of Cousin of "Pearnie" — doesn't like her — & making money by stories: & Harpers, & won: in a sensible matter of fact way, like a working class woman — Then smiles with her charming steady eyes. The light faded grey in the drawing room: she sat there lying back telling us in a very low voice, which went on steadily about the

Slave trade in H:K: about James & his little Chinese Destroyer manned by Ex-officers from England: how they steam out after sailing ships: the ships can't escape; they throw out bales of cotton & flannel: which float: James goes aboard & discovers the deck laden with opium, heroin: man cries out "That little parcel's for my father — Let me have that" Then all the other men say that the cement — is a present for an aunt. There's always fighting: Chinese planes come over very low down. She sits in her kitchen — all shoot with revolvers — The inhabitants crowd round, thinking the English safe — pretend they're selling eggs — Chinese generals come to dine — stand rifles on each side of their chair: send soldiers into the kitchen to see that the food isn't poisoned. She goes back for another two years. Writes & writes — Must bring home on her little Morris Cowley to write & pages of her monthly notes for Time & Tide. Such why? Oh its good pay. Has bought a house in Kensington. Will come back for 2 years with James, who will be the O'Gorman. All this serious, weary, intent — I like her & was glad to sign her Waves

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Clive & Mary last night: small, pink, undershot: not a woman of the world—without distinction; nice; rich; has lived above her means, spiritually & socially; has a little edge to her mouth: tells her little story. Clive; bad manners—how she almost manner lied. Clive; might stand in a Tobacconists—wasteful: enamoured: C. bending over her cigarette case: fetching her coat (black & expensive): all this strained: incredible to spend weeks with her: no prestige attached: no glow: a little pickety, nervous, unbearable; hysterical day—for all the world like the little yapping dog that ran mad round the Round Pond. Nessa (next day, going to the carpet shops) says Ah yes, but think of the speed boat!

21st July

Oh but I'm so tired—I sometimes think people cant know what they do to me when they ask me to 'see' them—how they hold me on the scorching lights: how I dry & shrivel—how I lie awake at night longing for rest—this is true. But know that I'm to be pitchforked up into the light & the glare again next day. Mary yesterday: Ethel today: Adrian tomorrow: & so forth Monday. Nessa Angelica: Tom & Eliz Bowen; Hatham & Follett; then Adrian suicidal face at night gave me the nightmare. And my head aches & my back: & I'm jabbed; welled—Never mind—I shall lie in the cool at Monks House.

Alice Ritchie ringing me up about dinner said "One thing I want to say: Please dont go so far away in your next book" She had just re-read the Waves: Magnificent: but loneliness almost unbearable.

Mrs Hardy writes that she often thought, after my wonderful article on Hardy, that she had asked me to write his life—Had I consented she would have given me all the materials: And how proud I was to be asked to do the T.L.S article!

On the other hand, my last little paper unnoticed

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I do not like Ethel when she is doing the powerful stunt—or what she thinks is: proclaiming that all is over: denouncing me: protesting her love, whipping up a scene; being urgent: despairing; melodramatic, & wobbly, & weak all at the same time. No I do not like it: & also I am bored. This is the old fashioned version of an emotional scene—the tactics are to leave the other person in a hole—where indeed I would willingly have been left, & if I had not remembered then all the letters I should have to write & the telephones: so I shouted after her, as she stumped down stairs, "Do you want your letters?" & as she tied them up—the H B letters—I teased & rallied, & felt the hollowness get at all, & her unattractive old age—not much else, so dusty. Jules Sam—& she went—in what mood I do not know. It's the superficiality of these things that disenchants me: her lust for emotion. & so I felt. Seeing lonely.. dramatising lonely instead of being anything.

But I am distraught & lazy: I am frittering away these last mornings experimenting with little stories; but, as I say, the change makes all work impossible: the sorting packing: like a dog one senses the move; then there's Adrian tonight, & Julia & so on: then there's Welwyn I think tomorrow. Nessa is gone; oh & my proofs will soon be coming: oh & I want to think out certain problems: & to be more vagarious: not yet to cast myself into a book. I want to go to Ireland, could that be managed. Are we too aloof, & absorbed—this work—whats the use of so much money—familiar thoughts: also another novel: Desmond gets between, why. his tepid praise; & the difficulty: peoples minds & bodies to be separated: & clothes; & demeanour; & the autumn; & our relations with people. Dinner & sleep parties. We

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Friday
Aug. 5th

<u>Rodmell</u>

Yesterday L. came in to my room at Breakfast & said Goldie is dead. One of those muddles apparently: he refused to tell his sister: took advice only of Morgan—Gerald Heard: was anxious to be economical, went to Guys: was had an operation, secretly, a week ago. Roger saw him on Tuesday (I think) thought him better, awhile dotty; talked; supposed him to be recovering: he died suddenly that night, of an internal haemorrhage. There was no time to send for anybody. There are the dismal details of the end of that fine charming spirit—so much a spirit that my thought was, anyhow he wont mind. And then, how much again we are: & then we die, as one friend, like him, we are: & then we die when they die. Regrets for not having had him here: at the He made his farewell intentionally at the dinner in June: spoke of death: not minding it. I never knew him well but had the common feeling that I was there with those twenty Cambridge fellows: & was pleased, of course, by what he wrote of the Waves: & so came nearer. I felt the strangest feeling now of our all being in the midst of some vast operation: of the splendour of this undertaking—life: of being capable of dying: an immensity surrounds us. No—I cant get it—That what broad outlines to "a novel", no doubt. (Its there I get the conception from which the book conceived) At night L & I talked of death again the second time this year: how we may be like worms crushed by a motor car: what does the worm know of the car—how it is made? There may be a reason: if so not one we, as human beings, can grasp. Goldie had some mystic beliefs.

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And now we have been to Lewes races & seen the fat lady in black with parts of her person spilling over the shooting stick on which her bulk is so insecurely poised: seen the tall tails of sporting society all lined up on their cars with the dickies fat bulging with picnic baskets: heard the bawl of bookies: & seen for a second the pounding straining horses with red faced jockeys lashing them sound by. What a noise they made — what a sense of ~~bod~~ muscle hard & stretched — & beyond the downs this windy sunny day looked wild & remote; & I could rethink them into uncultivated land again. So people will go on dying until we die, Leonard said. Lytton-Lavington, Gerald etc — all last August to be spoken to & let go, also because of the many times one would see them. But that is one of the results: not to let friends lapse. But what can one do? One has to follow ones bent — mine of late to be moody, irritable, longing for solitude. I will try to write to Helen: to ask Saxon down: there are the little efforts I make against death — & am at the same time, annoyed that my clean dress hasnt come, & that I've re-arranged the drawing room to L's liking to my disliking.

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Aug 17th

Now I think I have corrected the CR till I can correct no longer. And I have a few minutes holiday, before I need take the proofs in to L. Shall I then describe how I fainted again? — That is the galloping horses got wild in my head last Thursday night as I sat on the terrace with L. How cool it is after the heat! I said. We were watching the downs draw back into fine darkness after they had burnt like solid emerald all day. Now that was being softly finely veiled. And the white owl was crossing to fetch mice from the marsh. Then my heart leapt: & stopped: & leapt again: & I tasted that queer bitterness at the back of my throat: & the pulse leapt into my head & beat & beat, more savagely more quickly. I am going to faint I said & slipped off my chair & lay on the grass. Oh no I was not unconscious. I was alive: but possessed with this struggling team in my head: galloping, pounding. I thought something will burst in my brain if this goes on. Slowly it muffled itself. I pulled myself up, & staggered, now with what infinite difficulty & alarm, now partly fainting & seeing the garden painfully lengthened & distorted, back back back — how long it seemed — could I drag myself? — to the house: & gained my room & fell on my bed. Then pain, as of childbirth: & then that too slowly faded; & I lay presiding, like a flickering light, like a most solicitous mother, over the shattered splintered fragments of my body. A very acute & unpleasant experience.

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Sat
20th
August

A curious day in London yesterday. I said to myself standing at L's window, Look at the present moment because it's not been so hot for 21 years. There was a hot wind, as if one passed over a kitchen, going from the studio to the house. Outside girls & young men lying in white on the square grass. So hot we couldn't return the dining room. I fetched & carried & hardly let me walk upstairs carrying my own body. Coming back we had the car shut & the windscreen open—then sat in a hot rough gale, which, as we came to the lanes & woods became deliciously cold & green. The coolest place is the front seat of a car going at 40 or 50 miles with the windscreen open. Today, at 12.30 a wind rose: clouds descended; now at 3.45 it's almost a normal warm summer day. For 10 days this heat has lasted. After my faint my head soon throbs: & so I think. I think a little, of dying suddenly & often walk then go about eating & drinking & laughing & feeding the fish. Odd—the silence one attributes to death—the dream one has to believe it, & he found a Montague dead. laughing shaking out the with girls & good fellows. And L is to be photographed decomposed; & I am going on to be photographed Mr Woolf: what Three more books appearing on some time, on my work. remind me to make a note,

Friday
2nd Sept.

After this the wind blew & released all the prisoners—to I thought, walking on the down above Lewes on the sudden Katy Clock. But that long past, & it is a sea fret today, as we had meant to go to Canterbury. As we had meant—but what the good of meaning when at any moment there's a tap—behold Tom & Vivienne: we can't bring our food for dinner. But it was a friendly thought.—She would act Ophelia—alas no Hamlet would love her, with her powdered skin—& white tales. L. said: Tom, poor man, all

Reading this August:

the Souvenirs de Toqueville.
Any number of biographies —
Coleridge — one or two poems.
Lord Kilbracken memoirs.
Shaw Pen portraits.
Ainslie memoirs.
Vitas novel
MSS. (Livingstones)
Nothing much good —
Scarlet de T:

Coleridges letters: but failed to finish the 2nd vol.

People this August

Nessa. Julian
Clive - F. Marshall
Maynard Lydia
Sheppard. Roger.
Alice Ritchie (Kitty)
Tom & Vivienne.
Adrian & Karin
Judith
Nicolsons.

battened down as usual. prim, prey: making his kind jokes to her. Oh but why didn't they tell me Adrian Stephen was your brother. Why? why! Nobody mentioned it. They kept it from me. — Then her chops & changes. Where is my bag? Where — where — then a sudden amorous embrace for me — & so on: trailing about the garden — never settling — seizing the unlit glowing car — suddenly telling Tom to drive — which all ... he bears with great patience: feeling perhaps that his 7 months of freedom draw near. In the middle of them tea the post came with an astonishing letter from John to say that he does not intend to carry out our agreement He has left the press. L. says he will send no answer. What could one say indeed? What in blazing! That egotistical young man with all his jealousies — vanities & ambition, his weakness & changeableness is no loss. But we — & L. has lost an infinity of time. I suppose the severity with which L. was speaking to him on Friday when I came in to say Tea ready upset his trembling apple cart: his vanity could no longer endure: so he threw up the sponge, but smartly, with the least possible good manners or consideration. On the whole though what a mercy. Now I can roam about the basement unperturbed. And, coming from him, with this crashing folly, one can take the line of least resistance — needn't attempt the amicable go between: — needn't ask him to dinner a happy lively summer this — & I enjoy my peak of writing Flush — & think it a good idea — this easy indolent writing once in a way — to let my brain cool; & here I am, asked to write about 'my father' in the Times. No. So to forge old The Common Reader with its basket of plums went off on Monday last.

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Friday 15 Sept.

I'm in such a tremor that I've botched the last — penultimate chapter of Flush — is it worth writing this book — & can scarcely get it done; must therefore scribble here, making myself foam my letters, because — oh ridiculous crumpled petal — Wishart is publishing Li snapshots of me instead of the Lenare photograph. I feel that my privacy is invaded; my legs show; & I am revealed to the world (1000 at most) as a plain dowdy old woman. How odd! I never gave the matter a thought till this morning. I sent the photographs off with some compunction at being too late. Now I'm all of a quiver — cant read or write; & can, rightly expect little sympathy from L. What an ill joined web of nerves — to be honest — my being is! A touch makes the whole thing quiver. What can it make? The complex is: privacy invaded, ugliness revealed — &: that I was trapped into it by Wishart. Lord! one of the contributory causes is the [?] catalogue of the Rodmell sale. My ivy blooming walk is to be sold for building (the bees on the ivy bloom — gentled one so afternoon by Tom). A road is to be made from Deans to the down path. All is to be houses outside. Shall we try to buy? Isn't worth it? Yet saving one crumb when all is threatened? Yet — I was tired — & beat on my on my walk — too long — I was dead — what a bad dreaming that Angelica was dead — what a dream — how vivid — on my walk I almost woke hot crying — felt my mind flow like ~~~ the old habitual beauty I so complete & holy was the old habitual beauty England: the silver sheep clustering; & the down soaring, like birds wings, sweeping ~~cutting~~ up & up — I said that beauty had become almost entirely angelic (oh my legs in the snapshot) satisfactory I mean. I can fasten on a beautiful day, as a bee fixes itself on a sunflower. It feeds me, rests me, satisfies me, as nothing else does — (well that's not quite true: when Nessa dines & the children come I brim equally; but with a better I think a better humour, more getting across — but not this.) This has a holiness, heat & rapture — but not [?]

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has a holiness. This will go on after I'm dead.

A very good summer, this, for all my dipping & jobbing. My humour this morning. Beautifully quiet, airy, powerful. I think I want this more humane existence for my next — to spread carelessly among one's friends — to feel the width & amusement of human life: not to strain to make a pattern just yet: to be made supple, & to let the juice of usual things, talk, character, seep through me, quietly, involuntarily, before I say: Stop, & take out my pen. Yes, my thighs now begin to run smooth: no longer is every nerve upright. Yesterday we took flowers to old Mrs Grey. She is shrunk, & sits on a hard chair in the corner. The door open. She twitches & trembles. Has the wild expressionless stare of the old. L. liked her despair. I crawls up to bed hoping ~~exit~~ for the day; & I crawls down hoping for the night. "I'm an ignorant old woman — cant write or read. But I prays to God every night to take me — oh to go to my rest. Nobody can say what pains I suffer. Feel my shoulder" & she began shuffling with a rattle. "Hard as iron — full of water" & I felt it. She pulled down her stocking. "my legs too. The dropsy. But I'm ninety two: & all my brothers & sisters are dead: my daughters dead: my husband is dead..." She repeated her misery, could see nothing else: could only tell it, over & over: & kissed my hand, thanking us for our pennies all over again: & kissed my hand. This is what we make of our lives — no reading or writing — keeps her alive with private doctors — Human ingenuity in torture is very great.

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Sunday Oct 2nd

London

Yes. I will allow myself a new nib. Odd how coming back here upsets my writing mood. Odder still how possessed I am with the feeling that now, aged 50, I'm just poised to shoot forth quite free straight & undeflected my bolts whatever they are. Therefore all this flitter flutter of weekly newspapers interests me not at all. There are the souls changes. I dont believe in ageing. I believe in forever altering ones aspect to the sun. Hence my optimism. And to alter now, cleanly & sanely, I want to shuffle off this loose living randomness: people; reviews: fame: all the glittering scales; & be withdrawn: & concentrated. So I shant run about, just yet, buying clothes, seeing people. We are off to Leicester tomorrow, to the Labour party conference. Then back to the fever of publishing. My C.R. doesnt cause me a single tremor. Nor Holtby's book. I'm interested in watching what goes on for the moment without wishing to take part — a good frame of mind when one's conscious of power. Then I am backed now by the downs: the country: how happy L. & I are at Rodmell: what a free life that is — sweeping 30 or 40 miles; coming in when — how we like; sleeping in the empty house; dealing triumphantly with interruptions: & driving early into that divine loveliness — always some walk: & the fields on the purple ploughs: & going over to Tarring Neville — these are the flights I most love now — in the wide, the indifferent air. No being jerked, teased, tugged. And people come sanely, flowering into intimacy in my room. But this is the past, & future.

I am also reading DHL. with the usual sense of ~~free~~ frustration: & that he & I have too much in common — the same pressure to be ourselves: so that I dont escape when I read him: am suffused: what I want is to be made free of another world. This Proust does. Tom Lawrence is another concern: I dont want this, I join in saying:

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and the repetition of one idea. I dont want that either. I dont want 'a philosophy' in the least. I dont believe in other peoples reading of riddles. What I enjoy (in the Letters) is the sudden visualisation: the great sponges over the moor (of the spring in Cornwall) but I get no satisfaction from his explanations of what he sees. And then its harrowing: this panting effort after something: & 'I have £6.10 left' & then government hoofing him out, like a toad: & banning his book: the brutality of civilised society to this panting agonised man: & how futile it was. All this makes a sort of gasping in his letters. And none of it seems to me essential. So he pants & jerks. Then too I dont like strumming with two fingers — & the arrogance. After all English has one million words: why confine yourself to 6? & praise yourself for so doing: But its the preaching that rasps me. Like a person delivering judgment when only half the facts are there: & clinging to the rails & beating the cushion. Come out & see whats up here — I want to say. I mean its so barren: so easy: giving advice on a system. The moral is, if you want to help, never systematise — not till you're 70: & have been supple & sympathetic & creative & tried out all your nerves & scopes. He died though at 45. And why does Aldous say he was an 'artist'? Art is being rid of all preaching: things in themselves: the sentence in itself beautiful: multitudinous seas: daffodils that come before the swallow dares — whereas L. would only say what ~~prove~~ proved something. I havent read him of course. ~~what I mean~~ But in the Letters he

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can't listen beyond a point: must give advice: fit you in to the system too. Hence his attraction for those who want to be fitted: which I don't—indeed think it a blasphemy this fitting of Consciousness into a Laurence system: so much more innocent to leave them alone: nothing else to reverence except the convolution of Consciousness. Hence his need schoolboy tweaking & smacking of anyone opposed to him: Lytton, Bertie,—Squire—all are suburban, unclean. This tucking—coming down & measuring them. Why all this criticism of other people? Why not some system that includes the good? What a discovery that would be—a system that did not shut out.

Thursday Oct 13th

It was an odd sight—Desmond with Rachel on his arm. Everybody stood up. The white & red procession with the cross in front went ahead. Then very small, smooth, pale there appeared Rachel & Desmond arm in arm. I have never seen him as a father. Now he was that—gentle, kind—leading his daughter. She was a wax work—with her diamond cross: very pale: very small: carrying a white book. Oh but the inadequacy of the service. The sense of it being the entirely obsolete & primitive voice of a different tribal magnate, laying down laws for the tribe, & then these civilised sophisticated people letting themselves pretend that they obey. That clogged & deluted all the real feeling. And the David's stiff collar & back: & then sober, decorous backs kneeling there: & the respectability & the wavering voice of the Archbishop. The perpetual compromise. Opposite were the sort of women one sees in Oxford St. at midday (11.30) The

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bridegrooms side was notably better tailored & more distinguished than ours — where, as I imagine, all the [illegible] & so on had come, saying "Well, I'm a poet anyway so I needn't buy new gloves." Molly was much of a [illegible] in some maroon dress with a yellow bandeau. The ceremony went decorously forward in that grey brown church. Now & then one heard a shout from the market. No I don't like the ceremony. They hauled a dilapidated bishop up by the arm pits to give the blessing which he did in a trembling over emphatic voice, as if he were scrubbing the heads of David & Rachel as he called them. Then a sort of inner play went forward behind glass doors. One saw Salisbury & Molly signing books. Then a dribble back of relatives — then the Wagner wedding march. Then David & Rachel arm in arm sleepwalking down the aisle preceded by a boom which ushered them into a car & so into a happy long life, I make no doubt — but that's not the ceremony I like — oh no not at all. And following in the wake of the sleepwalkers came the Salisburys, & the MacCarthys arm in arm: ~~[illegible]~~ dwindling into Dermod & [illegible] old lady — presumably old Mrs Mc "Things heavenly plain" Hope kept saying — indeed green grey light at midday off old stone is not special — oh & I wanted some rapture — some precious stone to hold. None. None. Only endless trivial observations — Herbert C. carrying two umbrellas — Ralph & Frances in the grey tweed — [illegible]- taking prominent places. Lady Oxford, Lady Hartington, by lollipop, Maurice Baring & so on. a [illegible] to little dolls [illegible], Rachel's. to harbour a passion, to bear children. And I got washed up against the Bishop going out & heard him apologise to the clergy. But it's an honour to support a Bishop, said that man. And then they began talking about [illegible] so. Colonel & [illegible]

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Scotts guard. & so to the episcopal motor car, which was holding up the meat salesmen & wrote its gold cross. And now Desmond is stretched out by the fire in slippers, preparing his BBC talk I daresay: & Rachel & David are—shall we say—in a first class reserved carriage going to Sherborne: & he is pulling the rug straight over her knees: & she is looking at the fields, & thinking why has the whole world been given me: Then they have tea: I should think he will be shy tonight.

Today is the CR is out; & I haven't given it a thought, being entirely absorbed in my Essay, which I began yesterday. The last 3 or four days I've done parcels on a large: Bolster it: Good Family History to be despatched. a great bundle of orders found last night hidden in a drawer. But I like see the two little figures kneeling—for all the world like a picture—what do I mean? I'm too sleepy to say. And now for Spender.

Wed. Nov. 2nd

He is a rattle headed bolt eyed young man, raw boned, loose jointed who thinks himself the greatest poet of all time. I daresay he is—it is not a subject that interests me enormously at the moment. What does? I've just polished off the L.S. for the Times—a good one, I think, considering the current that was washing against. And going round that subject in the Times I have entirely remodelled my 'Essay'. It's to be an Essay-Novel, called the Pargiters—& it's to take in everything, sex, education, life &c: & come, with the most powerful & agile leaps, like a chamois across precipices from 1880 to here & now—That's the notion anyhow, & I have been in such a haze & dream & intoxication, declaiming phrases, seeing scenes, as I walk up Southampton Row that I can hardly say I have been alive at all, since the 10th Oct. Everything is running of its own accord into the stream, as with Orlando. What has happened of course is that after abstaining from the novel of

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fact all these years—since 1919—& N. & D. indeed. I find
myself infinitely delighting in facts for a change, &
in possession of quantities beyond counting: though I
feel now & then the tug to vision, but resist it. This is
the ~~great~~ true line, I am sure, after The Waves—
The Pargiters—this is what leads naturally on to the next
stage—the essay-novel. Then glowing being 20 & after. So
incandescent. I must read force up about Priestley, & his
priestliness: write an essay. wh. L. very rightly
advised against sending to the N. Statesman. So I have
altered it, against a rainy day, when I shall re-write
it as an essay—Middlebrow. And then all this
incandescence led to a ~~kind~~ the following horrors in my
heart the night before last. I lay in bed reasoning that
I could not come forward. Death I defy you, &c.
But it was a terrible effort, holding on to the ~~reins~~ reins.
So at 2.30 I woke L. & asked, very
reasonably, for ca. what he got me. And my
horses calmed down—he was so sensible. And I say I
light after a time; but Ethel came yesterday, which of course
am putting a strain on my heart, though there is
given out, at the log, or in the garden. permission not to
nothing wrong: so I take this as ~~at the~~ ladders works,
go to parties, like Margie. And that's a great
rest to do anything I dislike. I shall have then a very
Dulcimy. I think happy winter, writing the Pargiters, & go quietly, &
reasonable. I must be careful, & go people like
for God's sake. I must be — gleekments — people with their
ordering litter of torment me & be infinitely
Logan & Ethel who must brood & chew & dream, for the first time that
vanity: I must feeling as I do for this; & I have
gratitude; important. Why do I feel the others? I must
this book is in the heart about the dreary: we dined with
felt it Pippers Potter & the Poll on Stovins. And
Joined — Potter & the Poll on Stovins, corns & charming
hats.

Thursday
Nov. 10th

I am taking a morning off, having done the Chief Scene—the man exposing himself—in the Pargiters: to polish my L.S. (done) & then to write letters. There are Ott's memoirs—a great thing that Ott—Ott—ed. came, after all these years, old shabby tender to my sofa: & I liked her: at her unhelpfully that's Dotty: that's what we all stepped on. Can't tell the truth about love—but then that's so interesting & not inarticulate. Avoiding her ageing—Welbeck, the young men servants. So she leaves out her memoirs, full as they are of love letters & copulations. I must now write to her—& to Margaret Ll. D. & so on. Janet Case came round to tea today, & then there's [illegible] Leon. & Julia to dinner—a long day for me, also must must must be quiet & shallow this autumn, & finish the P's. How important I feel it!—well, this is the merest note. And now I begin a play & poem. Lanchester? to be delivered on Dec. 10th. I don't think we've ever been so happy, what with one thing & another And so intimate & so completely sincere, I mean L. & I. If it could only last like this another 50 years—life like this is wholly satisfactory. to me again. So to my letters.

Yes it was a long day & I had two days of jumps. Jumps after words but owing to the Carlton & the cat in broken glass, I am now steadier. I was not 'on the sofa' yesterday: which has been my refuge after tea. And the fight with Eddy: & we & with Logan, & L. is fighting with John: & we are the victors, I think, in all these fights: I'm sick of Eddy, have Logan to tea on his own terms: & John is in tears consulting his lawyer. But oh, how I've written since Oct 11th! So much that my fingers can't write, you see, & my brain spins scene after scene. It's only the tyranny of some fatigue & depression that leave me ten minutes now before lunch for this starved book.

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I must finish the first part—which is to be called 1880 in a day or two; & then freshen up: & read, for the next part—1880—1900.

On Wednesday we gave our party: notable for its graciousness, its chatter, its cocktails: Ott: Lady Oxford, the Jeffersons & so on. The two Lucies entertaining the peerage: a boy in white & Jacket handing blue green yellow drinks. And my money £100 lent them—did the trick. Rather a pimple festive way of spending money. Though I may be landed with 4 first panels. My comfort, Duncan, for the drawing room is come—& we have risen socially to the rank of the doom: younger sons of baronets—this like being real gentry sitting with one foot embedded in pile.

And then, on Friday, we went to Brighton to Sophie: tea'd a stout matron: Sophy "This is more of a pleasure, like a born lady," she said; & indeed it was—more preceding party to me than the cocktail one.

Dec. 17th

I have precisely 4 minutes before luncheon in which to record Rebecca West at dinner—she is a very clever woman, rather rubbed about the thoracy: with a great subtlety & worldly talk: & much gos-humour: a setting covering society divs: flowers from her admirers to apologise for staying late. 1.30.

And Logan—lord, what a bore: a dogmatic cultivated American bore: no teeth in him: but an uneasy worm squirming for compliments. This I could see through his shallow waters: I was 'very severe' L. says (L. is always a judge of my severity: & Sophie) but I can't keep my temper when

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people think. Its not playing the game. And then — oh seen so many people: & a round up with L's family on then the Frys to dinner: & we're cheated of the car for Christmas, God damn their souls: all this is very hollow shelter: & dinner with Hope last night — her stuffed black dachshund sausage stretched along my knee; & so to Rodmell on Tuesday. I've almost written out my first gush — 234 typewritten pages since Oct 10th — & shall but bring it back to rest for a few days at Monks House. But the fun of the book is to come, with Magdalena & Elvira.

Yes, today, Dec 19th, Monday, I have written myself to the verge of total extinction. Pray God I can stop — writing in coolness & decorum. & let the whole thing mend — how I beg them to do this — cool & slow & stop altogether. I shall take up Flush again to cool myself. By Heaven, I have written 60,320 words since Oct. 11th I think this must be far the quickest going of any book: comes far ahead of Orlando or the Lighthouse. But then these 60 thousand will have to be reduced: dried into 30 or 40 thousand — a great grind to come. Never mind. I have secured the outline & fixed a shape for the rest. I feel, for the first time, No I mustn't take risks crossing the road, till the book is done. And though to me this is so important; I receive, at eleven — at Agaze, Ring the Bell & Run Away, the letter feel the bitter pricks which will so be so lavishly provided when The Pargiters comes out Oh but by then I shall have perfected my social technique. I am practising with

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Eddy, & intend to make further experiments, when opportunity serves, with Logan. Yes, I will be free & entire & absolute & mistress of my life by Oct. 1st 1933. Nobody shall come here on their terms; or hale me off to them on theirs. Oh & I shall write a poets book next. This one, however, releases such a torrent of fact as I did not know I had in me. I must have been observing & collecting these 20 years — since Jacobs Room anyhow. Such a wealth of odd things seem to present themselves that I cant choose even — hence too many words all about one paragraph. What I must do is to keep control; & not be too sarcastic; & keep the right degree of freedom & reserve. But oh how easy this writing is compared with The Waves! I wonder what the degree of carat-gold is in the 2 books. Of course there is less gold here; but there's a good deal of gold — more than I'd thought — in externality. Anyhow, what care I for my ~~raggle taggle~~ goose feather bed? I'm off to join the raggle taggle gipsies oh! The Gipsies, I say: not Hugh Walpole & Priestley — no. In truth The Pargiters is first cousin to Orlando, though the cousin in the flesh: Orlando taught me the trick of it. Now — oh but I must stop for 10 days at least — no 14 — almost 21 days — now I must compose the 1880 — ~~1890~~ 1900 chapter which needs skill. But I like applying skill I am L is off to the Lanchesters in a rage. I am soon.

going to polish off my Jobs: & tomorrow we go. & think me grateful A very fruitful moved & I think to my tired heart. So I autumn — thanks hardly to my tired heart: so I could impose terms: & I have never lived in such — ma, such a dream, such a violent impulsion — Compulsion — scarcely seeing anything but the Pargiters.

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1933

This is a little out of place, but then so am I. We are up for Angelica's party last night, & I have half an hour to spend before starting in the new Lanchester (not ours — one lent) back to Rodmell. We have been there just thinking one fortnight. — I ate myself into the heart of peace — solitude — so as to adumbrate a headache. And to wipe off the intensity of concentration trying to re-write that abominable dog Flush in 13 days, so as to be free — oh heavenly freedom — to write the Pargiters, — I insisted upon a night of chatter. Let me see. I fell into the arms of Nan & Ethel — the two discreet ladies. Nan had a banana brown mask; Ethel the head of a Persian cat-like mask. I like the disorientation they give my feelings (have slipped for 5 minutes into ~~Slovene~~ Slovene; thoughts about civilisation — indeed it's a good discipline, this new one, of forcing one's brain ~~into~~ the other way for a time — see how vigorously it starts back —)
Then I was seated with Nan; & the two women, tried to calculate the powers which were then in the ascendant & said she 'infinitely preferred this to the Kecan Manoli'
Oh how much happier I am for this meal than for my own dinner! Yes, Rijmen. I'm a Bohemian at heart. I have just slipped into the other. There is a certain charm in it. But our Butler is the most Bohemian of all. And then dear Ethel — & how stop. I said you're going to celebrate the patchwork of Ethel. I can't allow that. For I assure you. Ethel's humanity is more respectability — Oh my dear, I assure you you're wrong. She has a very subtle sense of society — I heard. She gets things from Lady Oxford for instance. That I don't.
If she has a fault it is that she never sees anyone

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faults: which tends of course to make them — I mean, its a little lacking in salt, that is to me" While this ambling & pacing went on — I always whip myself up to say something because I give myself that credit — but it often very silly: something I've said before — Ethel was sitting hugely on the model's throne talking to Raymond. And we were eating ham — chicken & cream cheese pate sandwiches — & drinking wine — Nessa's commissariat was lavish & opportune — I daresay there were 60 — or 40 — people there. Wogan drifted up. We talked. I was very polite, because of John. He was very polite. Rosamund I thought a little chill — no, shy I daresay. Wogan said the Nessa show be filmed: I in my vague way, said V. Whom wants to do it — but she meant to broadcast, & oddly enough, when I came home I found a letter from her saying so. Then W. talked about the autumnal ollolini calling R. to her upstairs & leaving him to hear Dryden read by Pepsey: to walk in the garden & get advice about trees & pagodas. We have a letter — but how gorgeously, & I daresay wantonly — in the shadow of R. who, modest I think, is yet a best seller: an American woman: too — a musical, rapt girl a woman: easily content though with familiar melodies. Wogan wears well cut trousers — was a shooting man — & a red jersey to symbolise that he is now disowned by his father, a painter. R later got into talk with L about John: & was vague, grieved, apologetic. yet sisterly. Coulant, I think: but up much defence. And dear old Marjorie performed. My word! she is now an elderly fat woman — grey as a badger, but so stout, so pendulous — so much an old friend's matron for all her witchways — which are in truth obscene

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with her peculiar touch of genius in being ~~that~~ blatantly obscene. She has few, black, crooked (so it seemed to me) teeth. She opens her mouth, grimaces, claws, paws, stamps, projects, lawks, pirouettes — should have been on the stage — a Marie Lloyd. And Cory up for her Bohemian night, determined to be Bohemian — as he signified by ~~talking~~ saying in a loud voice under the lee of Nan "My family call him the Arch-Bugger" — Cory was much taken by her, & stretching a long arm I pulled one strand of her hair, & introduced them. She gets moth eaten, she says, in the country: ravaged to feel it damp. clayey: is driven in on herself; reads too much; can't escape: has no one to rub up with — yet — Wogan said — is the life & soul of Leicester: always going with the hunting set — according to him the most barbarous of all people. Children come down with blood on their foreheads for 3 days after a hunt: mustn't wash it off. Then there was Saxon bowing & smiling in silence like a Chinese mandarin — so I bowed & smiled in silence swaying all my chrome to him. "We know each other so well, we [illegible] now" I said, reflecting that I should ask him to dinner: but I doubt if he wants it. (my 30 minutes is stretching. L is talking to Miss Johnson, who won't do. And last night Belsher saying up to say her fur coat was stolen: might she borrow one from me: so up she came, & alarmed Miss Johnson's protégé an unemployed man who is allowed in: significant of the relations between Miss J. & B — strained. Miss B. said the coat was worth £30, Miss B. said: & this money of too poor to buy another: a this money of

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she rings up to say she is ill, & so is all her family. What then about Porter? I wonder — that strapping American? Oh the future of the pen — for the millionth time it is melting again.

I daresay this will be my last appearance in this book. because I think I have destroyed this pen, tired my hand, & nothing but thin water comes from my brain, having written so much, so quickly. Wri 12.35 on Tuesday January 3rd 1933.